FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Many University of North Carolina School of the Arts faculty members, students and alumni, including UNCSA Chancellor John Mauceri and recent School of Drama alumnus Joshua Morgan, will be involved in the events at town hall and community weekend.*

**National Endowment for the Arts Chair to Play Major Role in Launch of Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts**

*Rocco Landesman will speak at Reynolda House, host Town Hall meeting at UNCSA, attend Gala, and participate in ribbon cutting*

*Winston-Salem, NC (Monday, August 9, 2010)* – Rocco Landesman, Chair, National Endowment for the Arts, will be in Winston-Salem for the opening of the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts, September 10-12. Landesman was selected to head the Endowment by President Barrack Obama. Prior to joining the NEA, he was a Broadway theater producer.

“We would be excited at any time by a visit by the Chair of the National Endowment of the Arts,” said Tonya Deem, Chair, The Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, “but having Mr. Landesman here for the opening of The Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts is especially significant. The opening is an historic occasion. Mr. Landesman’s active participation is evidence of this fact and the high regard in which Winston-Salem and its arts and cultural community and the Center’s namesake, Milton Rhodes, are held not only here in our state and region, but throughout the nation.”

Landesman will arrive in Winston-Salem, Friday morning, September 10, and be the guest of honor at a luncheon for arts, cultural, civic, business and political leaders. He will present remarks about his Art Works initiative that emphasizes the economic importance of robust, energized arts and cultural communities.

From 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. he will host a Town Hall meeting on “How Arts and Innovation Impact Communities” on the campus of the University of North Carolina School of the...
Arts. A panel of artists, arts patrons, and entertainment figures will participate. The public is invited.

Friday evening the NEA Chair will join hundreds of other guests at the “Light Up the Arts” Gala Opening of the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts and attend a concert at the Stevens Center by legendary vocalist Tony Bennett. Then he will participate in the ribbon cutting for The Center at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday morning at the Spruce Street entrance.

“I cannot think of a more appropriate way to launch The Center than by having the leading figure in the nation’s arts world here with us to emphasize the role that the arts play in all of our lives and our economy, the importance of private philanthropy, and the urgent need for greater public support to nurture and sustain the arts,” said Janie Wilson, co-chair of The Center’s opening celebration.

Landesman was reared in St. Louis, Missouri and received his undergraduate education at Colby College and the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He earned a doctorate in Dramatic Literature at the Yale School of Drama where he remained and served as assistant professor for four years.

The NEA Chair is experienced in both business and art worlds. He left Yale to start a private investment fund which he ran until his appointment in 1987 as president of Jujamcyn, a company that owns and operates five Broadway theaters.

Before and after joining Jujamcyn, Mr. Landesman produced Broadway shows, the most notable of which are Big River (1985 Tony Award for Best Musical), Angels in America: Millennium Approaches (1993 Tony Award for Best Play), Angels in America: Perestroika (1994 Tony Award for Best Play), and The Producers (2001 Tony Award for Best Musical). In 2005, he purchased Jujamcyn and operated it until President Obama announced his intention to nominate him to the NEA chairmanship.

Over the years, Landesman has been engaged in the debate about arts policy, speaking at forums and writing numerous articles that have focused mainly on the relationship between the commercial and not-for-profit sectors of the American theater.
years, he returned to the Yale School of Drama and Yale Rep to teach. Never one to be pigeon holed, Landesman's biggest passions are theater, baseball, horse racing, and country music. He has owned three minor league baseball teams, racehorses, and a collection of Roger Miller long-playing records.

The Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts in Winston-Salem, NC, will open Friday, September 10 with the Light Up the Arts Gala with Tony Bennett presented by Hanesbrands Inc., followed by Community Weekend presented by Reynolds American and Wachovia, a Wells Fargo Company, featuring more than 100 arts and cultural experiences under one roof on September 11 and 12.

The Gala will be a festive party from 6 p.m. to midnight with music, art, drama, and laughter with the Steven Center performance by 15-time Grammy Award winner, Tony Bennett, as the centerpiece.

“Our goal is to showcase the best artistry Winston-Salem has to offer,” said Wilson. “We will feature nationally acclaimed talent from our own City of Arts and Innovation, including recognized performers who are returning to our city after launching successful careers elsewhere.”

Community Weekend begins after the Saturday morning ribbon cutting. It is presented by Reynolds American and Wachovia, a Wells Fargo Company. On Saturday, September 11, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, September 12, from noon to 5 p.m., more than 100 artistic and cultural experiences will dazzle and delight. All Community Weekend activities are free. For a complete schedule of the more than 100 arts and cultural activities offerings, visit CityOfTheArts.com/opening.

The Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County was established in 1949 and was the first locally established arts council in the United States. The Arts Council enriches the quality of life for people in Winston-Salem and neighboring communities by raising funds for the arts, advocating for the arts, sponsoring events in conjunction with other arts
organizations, providing educational opportunities strengthening cultural resources, developing social capital, and aiding economic development. Its continued effectiveness can be attributed to the thousands of dedicated volunteers and contributors who are firmly committed to the idea that Winston-Salem is the “City of Arts and Innovation."

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For additional Information, please contact
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