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Paul Marley WFU Art Department

CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM HUMAN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT AND WFU ART DEPARTMENT COLLABORATE ON ART PROJECT AS PART OF KENAN INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS’ ACCORD INITIATIVE

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (May 25, 2010) – As part of the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts’ ACCORD Initiative, the City of Winston-Salem Human Relations Department and the Wake Forest University (WFU) Art Department are collaborating on a visual art project entitled Transforming Race.

The Transforming Race project will culminate in the presentation of visual art pieces by five public high school students and five WFU art students that address issues relating to racial identity and diversity at a gallery opening on Thursday, June 10, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Liberty Arts Center at 526 North Liberty Street in downtown Winston-Salem. The opening is free and open to the public.

The art will remain on display at the Liberty Arts Center for just one evening before traveling to high schools throughout the county during the next academic year. For information on the opening, please call 336-722-0030.

The ACCORD initiative, which stands for Artists Contributing to Civic-Oriented and Responsive Democracy, is a project of the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts dedicated to sparking dialogue about the essential role of the arts and civic-minded artists within a thriving democracy. Through this initiative, the Institute is partnering local nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies with area college students to create arts-based projects that address community needs and/or social issues.

The high school and college students participating in the Transforming Race project are working together in pairs to examine racial attitudes, personal experiences, and the overall relevance of diversity. The goals of Transforming Race are to: create a dialogue among participants about racial identity that leads to insights about those different from themselves; have participants work together to find words, images and metaphors that can communicate the problems and joys of being a person raised in a multiracial, post-segregation society; use the content developed in the workshop to create art objects that convey the feelings, attitudes and conclusions of the participants; and use the art to communicate issues of racial identity beyond the participants to the high school community and further.

Participants in the project include five artists from WFU: Becky Bowers, senior; Courtney Whicker, junior; Mary Alice McCullough, freshman; Katie Wolf, freshman; and Lauren Arrington, junior; as well as a videographer, Courteneoy Morris, senior. Participating high school artists are Rae-Yao Lee, a junior at Reagan High School; Victor Mendoza, a junior at Parkland High School; Elizabeth Rosales, a junior at Parkland
High School; Brandon Wilkins, a junior at Parkland High School; and Jonathan Cunningham, a sophomore at Mt. Tabor High School.

Transforming Race project coordinators include: David Finn, Professor of Art and Rubin Faculty Fellow at Wake Forest University; Wanda Allen-Abraha, Director, City of Winston-Salem Human Relations Department; Meredith Britt, Administrative Assistant, City of Winston-Salem Human Relations Department; and Dr. Ernie Wade, Educational Consultant and member of the City of Winston-Salem Human Relations Commission.

Transforming Race is the second project of the ACCORD Initiative. The first ACCORD project was a collaboration between The Enrichment Center, An Affiliated Chapter of the ARC, and students from the University of North Carolina School of Arts, who are also part of Art Tasting, an emerging performing arts organization in Winston-Salem. Together they presented an original short play by Ian Antal and Suzy McCalley, entitled “The Yesman,” which examined communication issues and barriers (particularly verbal communication) between individuals with and without disabilities. “The Yesman,” was performed on Thursday, April 29 at 7:00 p.m. at The Enrichment Center at 1006 S. Marshall Street in Winston-Salem.

The Winston-Salem Human Relations Commission / Human Relations Department (WSHRC/HRD) educates, provides, facilitates, promotes, anticipates, studies, and recommends programs, projects, feedback, and actions for the elimination of discrimination in any and all fields of human relationships.” One of the key areas of responsibility includes conducting community outreach to educate and engage the public in the areas of social justice and race relations. This partnership project is a strong example of such community outreach. For information contact Wanda Allen-Abraha, Director at 336.727.8000 or email WANDAEA@cityofws.org.

The Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts (www.kenanarts.org) is a privately funded program of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts that incubates projects that sustain artists at every point in their creative development through strategic partnerships that capitalize on visionary thinking in the arts.

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts (www.uncsa.edu) is the University of North Carolina’s conservatory for the arts, dedicated entirely to the professional training of students possessing exceptional talents in the performing, visual and moving image arts. UNCSA offers students focused, intense, professional training at the high school, baccalaureate, and masters levels in its schools of Dance, Design and Production, Drama, Filmmaking and Music.

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