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For immediate release.

**LOS ANGELES STUDENT GERARDO NAVARRO TAKES FIRST PLACE IN THE
2018 AUGUST WILSON MONOLOGUE COMPETITION NATIONAL FINALS**
Navarro Placed Second in the Los Angeles Regional Finals
Hosted by Center Theatre Group at the Mark Taper Forum

Center Theatre Group's regional finalist Gerardo Navarro took first place in the August Wilson Monologue Competition (AWMC) National Finals held at the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway on Monday, May 7, 2018. Representing Los Angeles and the Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, Navarro performed a monologue from "King Hedley II," which earned him a \$1,500 scholarship and a \$3,000 cash prize.

Navarro placed second in the AWMC Los Angeles Regional Finals hosted by Center Theatre Group at the Mark Taper Forum on March 5. Fellow student Hannah Franklin, who placed first in the L.A. Regional Finals, also earned a trip to New York City and performed in the AWMC National Finals.

Center Theatre Group has hosted the Southern California component of the national monologue competition for seven consecutive years. The program is designed to inspire and educate Los Angeles youth using monologues from August Wilson's "American Century Cycle," a 10-play cycle that details the complexity of the African American experience in the 20th century.

Center Theatre Group also offers an in-school residency as part of the larger August Wilson Program. The August Wilson In-School Residency is a semester-long program that provides Title 1 schools with a multidisciplinary study of the work of August Wilson. This year, classes from Animo Leadership Charter High School, Carson High School, East L.A. Performing Arts Magnet and Ellen Ochoa Prep Academy took part in the residency. The students and teachers from each of the four classrooms attended the AWMC Los Angeles Regional Finals as part of their residency experience, witnessing the power of theatre as their peers bring August Wilson's characters to life.

"AWMC is one of the ways we honor the legacy of playwright August Wilson—a man whose work is truly timeless transcending race, gender and generations," said Center Theatre Group Director of Education and Engagement Tyrone Davis. "It's such a privilege to see young people from all over Los Angeles take on these iconic characters from the American theatre."

AWMC is a national program presented by Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company and Jujamcyn Theaters and hosted in cities throughout the country, including Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, New Haven, New York, Pittsburgh, Portland, Seattle, Dallas and Greensboro, North Carolina. Each city runs its program differently and each experience is designed to provide intensive learning

opportunities for high school students to study and practice the craft of acting through the work of August Wilson.

The Southern California component of the August Wilson Monologue Competition is led by the Center Theatre Group Education and Community Partnerships Department. One of the most active theatre education programs in the country, Education and Community Partnerships reached roughly 34,000 students, teachers, patrons and community members throughout Southern California in the 2016-2017 season.

Funding for Center Theatre Group's August Wilson Program is provided by the Center Theatre Group Affiliates. The program also receives generous support from Center Theatre Group's Corporate Circle, Joseph Drown Foundation, the Dwight Stuart Youth Fund, Hearst Foundations, the Rosenthal Family Foundation and Hope Landis Warner.

Center Theatre Group honors its long-standing relationship with August Wilson through its August Wilson Program, as well as through its continued production of Wilson's work. Center Theatre Group has presented nine of Wilson's plays, including two world premiere productions of his work. Most recently, Wilson's "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" had a successful run at the Mark Taper Forum in the fall of 2016.

More information on Center Theatre Group's August Wilson Monologue Competition can be found at www.CenterTheatreGroup.org/AugustWilson.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2000-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation's leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

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May 8, 2018