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Michael “Mikell” Pinkney, Ph.D., Recognized as AUDELCO Torchbearer

Gainesville, Fla., December 9, 2014 — Michael “Mikell” Pinkney, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Florida (UF) School of Theatre + Dance was honored by AUDELCO (Audience Development Committee, Inc.) as one of six people named a 2014 AUDELCO Torchbearer. Torchbearers were recognized at a ceremony on Nov. 16, 2014 at the Dwyer Center in Harlem, New York.

Torchbearers are artists who have won awards in the past and have continued to make recognizable contributions to black theatre production and practice in the New York City area over the past 42 years of the organization’s existence. AUDELCO was established and incorporated in 1973 by the late Vivian Robinson, to stimulate interest in, and support of performing arts in black communities. The awards were named the “VIVs” in honor of Robinson following her death in 1996.



Pinkney was recognized for his many years serving as founding artistic director at The Billie Holiday Theatre in New York, and founding artistic director at the Harmonie Park Playhouse in Detroit, where he developed award winning resident acting companies at each location. He holds AUDELCO Awards for both acting and directing, and, in 1981, Pinkney became the youngest African American to direct for the Broadway stage—a record that still stands.

“I am highly honored by this recognition, which represents acknowledgement of my many years of service to the black theatre and solidifies my position as an ‘elder statesman’ in this community,” said Pinkney.

At the November 16th ceremony, each honoree was pinned by Mary B. Davis, one of the original founders and chair emeritus of AUDELCO, and each Torchbearer then recognized and presented a young artist of their choosing to “pass on the torch” by introducing and pinning the young artist as a new “bearer of the torch.” Pinkney pinned Reginald L. Wilson, a 2011 graduate of the School of Theatre + Dance’s MFA acting program who won a 2012 AUDELCO Award for Best Lead Actor for *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* by August Wilson. Wilson teaches acting at The City University of New York, conducts popular private acting workshops for black actors and works continuously on stage, film and television in New York City. This year’s ceremony paid homage to the late actress, Ms. Ruby Dee, and was followed by a reception honoring the 2014

School of THEATRE + DANCE

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nominees for the AUDELCO 42nd Annual “VIV” Awards for Excellence in Black Theatre held at Symphony Space in New York.

“The School of Theatre + Dance faculty is extremely pleased to learn that Mikell Pinkney’s many achievements have earned such prestigious recognition by AUDELCO,” said Jerry Dickey, director of the School of Theatre + Dance. “At the UF level, Dr. Pinkney has made lasting contributions to the theatre curriculum, stage productions and student recruitment. He has been instrumental in diversifying our student majors and in mentoring students on all levels. He has raised awareness of African-American theatre through his sponsorship of the Black History Variety Show, performed annually by students in our school. We know him to be gem among our faculty, and it is gratifying to see that his contributions are being recognized far beyond our campus.”

About the School of Theatre + Dance

The School of Theatre + Dance is one of the University of Florida College of the Arts’ three fully accredited schools. Undergraduate students can pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in acting, dance, musical theatre, theatre production—including costume design, lighting design and scenic design—or a Bachelor of Arts degree in dance studies or general theatre. Minors are also offered in dance and theatre as well as certificates in arts in medicine and dance in healthcare. Student organizations, showcase programs and other intensives provide students with invaluable professional experiences. UF is home to three School of Theatre + Dance performance venues, including the Constans Theatre, Black Box Theatre and G-6 Studio. To learn more about the School of Theatre + Dance, including upcoming performance dates and ticket information, visit www.arts.ufl.edu/theatreanddance.

About the College of the Arts

The College of the Arts, previously known as the College of Fine Arts, is one of the 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. The College of the Arts offers baccalaureate, master’s and Ph.D. degree programs in its three institutionally-accredited schools — the School of Art + Art History, School of Music and School of Theatre + Dance. The college is home to the Center for Arts in Medicine, Center for Arts and Public Policy, Center for World Arts, Digital Worlds Institute, University Galleries and the New World School of the Arts in Miami. More than 100 faculty members and approximately than 1,200 students work together daily to engage, inspire and create. The college hosts more than 300 performances, exhibitions and events each year. Faculty and students also exhibit and perform at other local, national and international venues. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

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