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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT KARAMU HOUSE TO ENGAGE GREATER CLEVELAND'S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Cleveland's own Karamu House launches a new program, the Young Professionals Council, to engage and support the area's next generation of diverse leaders and professionals.

(Cleveland, Ohio)—Karamu House has a longstanding history of being here people from different races, religions, and economic backgrounds come together through the arts. “Since I joined Karamu in 2015, I have always dreamt of a program that engaged young professionals through the arts,” says Tony F. Sias, president and CEO. “I am thrilled to announce the launch of our new Young Professionals Council, led by Martine C. Wilson, an associate at Thompson Hine LLC and member of our Board of Directors.”

Karamu House's new Young Professionals Council (YPC) is designed to create a diverse collective of young professionals (ages 22-35) to socialize, network, and support Karamu House, America's oldest producing Black theatre. Council members will also have the opportunity to participate in leadership development programs and be given opportunities to engage with Karamu's Board of Directors and other diverse leadership throughout Northeast Ohio.

Annual membership for first-year members is a tax-deductible membership donation of \$100.00. The Council is hosting its first event, a virtual wine tasting, on Thursday, November 12, 2020, in partnership with Flight Cleveland. Interested young professionals can join the Council (and/or register for the event) by visiting Karamu's website at <http://www.karamuhouse.org/about/ypc>.

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About Karamu House

Recognized as the oldest African American performing arts institute in the nation, Karamu House is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places and featured in the Smithsonian's African American Museum. Legendary artists including Langston Hughes, Ruby Dee, Robert Guillaume, Ron O'Neal, Bill Cobbs, James Pickens, Jr., Vanessa Bell Calloway and Imani Hakim have been associated with the 104-year old “place of joyful gathering” (the meaning of “Karamu” in Swahili.)

In 1915, Oberlin College graduates Russell and Rowena Jelliffe opened the Playhouse Settlement in an area called Cleveland's “Roaring Third.” The Jelliffes wanted to build an environment where people of different races, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds could come together to share common ventures through the arts. Karamu was established as a gathering place for racially diverse members of the surrounding community at that time. Today, Karamu is a beating heart for the entire community, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identification, or age. Core programs include socially relevant and professional quality theatre; arts education programming for all ages; and community programming, such as comedy, live jazz, and spoken word performances, that invites participation and engagement, reflection, and a re-commitment to cultural values.