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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM FILLS KEY POSITIONS**

**LOS ANGELES (July 17, 2012)** Following months of challenges to fill key positions at the California African American Museum (CAAM), Executive Director, Charmaine Jefferson is pleased to announce three new hires to fill long-standing vacancies. These recent hires include a research librarian, a visual arts curator and a history curator to help move forward the institution's important mission "to research, collect, preserve, and interpret for public enrichment of history, art and culture of African Americans with an emphasis on California and the Western states."

Born and raised in South Los Angeles, CAAM's new History Curator, Program Manager, Javon Johnson earned his Ph.D. from Northwestern University in Performance Studies with certificates in African American and gender studies. Among many other career accomplishments, Dr. Johnson completed the Visions & Voices' Provost's Post Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Southern California (USC). Housed in USC's Department of American Studies and Ethnicity, he taught African American Popular Culture; Race, Gender & Sexuality; and Race and Class in Los Angeles.

"I aspire to make history come alive in ways that will make our stories equally attractive to young audiences and history enthusiasts alike," revealed Dr. Johnson.

Vida L. Brown joined CAAM as its Visual Arts Curator, Program Manager to develop, curate and manage visual art exhibitions and collaborations with colleagues, artists and

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others on programs and events. Brown earned a Bachelor of Arts in Industrial Psychology from Pepperdine University and a Master's Degree in Public Arts Studies from USC. Having managed more than 60 art projects, her scope ranges from developing public art policies, facilitating training sessions, curating art exhibitions, conceptualizing and implementing events to collaborating on design teams.

“It is with passion, leadership, team spirit and perseverance have I continued to serve on boards, committees, community engagement projects and youth mentoring programs for the awareness and inclusion of the arts in multifaceted environments,” Brown said.

As CAAM's new research librarian, Denise L. Mc Iver is managing projects to upgrade library operations and is responsible for the information needs of CAAM's curatorial and programming staff, scholars, students and the general public. Mc Iver will also develop programming to promote and increase access to CAAM's Research Library and Information Center for the public. A graduate from Fordham University in New York, Mc Iver earned a Bachelor's Degree in Cultural Anthropology. Mc Iver also earned a Master's Degree in Library Science from St. John's University. She is the author of the Random House title, “Droppin' Science: Straight Up Talk From Hip Hop's Greatest Voices” and was a contributing essayist of “Black Like Me?” which appeared in the collection of “A Family Affair: What it Means to be African American Today.”

“CAAM continues to be one of the best institutions in which to house the history of African Americans. As the library continues to evolve, I look forward to assisting students, a variety of stakeholders and potential constituents and users,” Mc Iver said.

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**ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM**

The California African American Museum (CAAM) researches, collects, preserves and interprets for public enrichment the history, art and culture of African Americans.

Chartered by the California State Legislature in 1977, CAAM is a state supported institution and a partner with the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization Friends, the Foundation of the California African American Museum. In addition to its permanent collection of over 6,000 objects of art, artifacts and historical documents, CAAM also houses a research library containing more than 20,000 volumes, employs and trains high school students through its *Young Docents* program, and hosts in-house curated exhibitions and traveling exhibitions on a regular basis. The museum also tours CAAM exhibitions throughout California and the nation.

Located at 600 State Drive in Exposition Park, the museum is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm, and Sundays 11am-5pm. Admission and workshop participation is always FREE. Parking in the adjacent lot is \$10.00 all day at Figueroa and 39<sup>th</sup> Streets And provides access to all of Exposition Park. For more information on the California African American Museum visit [www.caamuseum.org](http://www.caamuseum.org).

**CURRENT EXHIBITIONS IN THE CAAM GALLERIES:**

“Promises of Freedom: Selections from the Arthur Primas Collection” through September 2, 2012

“Löis Mailou Jones – A Life in Vibrant Color” July 12, 2012 through September 16, 2012

“Shared Thread/CAAM’s Courtyard” June 28, 2012 through December 30, 2012

“Legacy of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company: More Than a Business” through March 3, 2013

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