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**LEGENDARY MUSICIAN AND COMPOSER HERBIE HANCOCK ONE OF THREE
TO BE HONORED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

California African American Museum Presents *An Artful Evening at CAAM*

LOS ANGELES (September 29, 2011) – Friends, the Foundation of the California African American Museum (CAAM) presents *An Artful Evening at CAAM*, its annual gala and awards presentation, Saturday, October 15, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. In a cultural trifecta, Lifetime Achievement Awards will be presented to three outstanding artists: Herbie Hancock will be presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award, Musician & Composer; Donald McKayle will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award, Dancer & Choreographer; and Betye Saar the Lifetime Achievement Award, Visual Artist. Hosted by 94.7 FM The WAVE's Pat Prescott, *An Artful Evening at CAAM* is a black tie event featuring a reception, silent auction, live entertainment, a hosted bar, post dinner dancing and free valet parking.

Musician and composer Herbie Hancock, an icon of modern music, is a Chicago native with five decades of musical accomplishments covering a range of genres and styles. Hancock has worked with famed artists including Miles Davis, Chick Corea, Wayne Shorter, Joni Mitchell, Pink, India Arie and Seal to name a few. Following his five years with the Miles Davis Quintet beginning in 1963, Herbie made appearances on Davis' groundbreaking 'In a Silent Way' and 'Bitches Brew', which heralded the birth of jazz-fusion. The 12-time Grammy Award winner also has five MTV video wins, two BMI Film wins and received an Academy Award for his score of the film, "Round Midnight".

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In 2007, Hancock recorded and released “River: The Joni Letters,” a tribute to longtime friend and collaborator Joni Mitchell. It garnered three GRAMMY nominations and two wins for Best Contemporary Jazz Album and Album of The Year. This marked only the second time in history a jazz album has won music’s highest honor with the first taking place almost 50 years prior. His latest Grammy wins in February 2011 include 'Best Improvised Jazz Solo' award for his solo on the song *A Change Is Gonna Come* from *The Imagine Project*, while the title song, *Imagine*, was awarded 'Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals.' In addition, Hancock is an active philanthropist and is an advocate for many causes. He is a founder of The International Committee of Artists for Peace (ICAP). A master of classical and jazz music, Hancock combines these genres as the Los Angeles Philharmonic Creative Chair for Jazz. He also serves as Institute Chairman of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz; the foremost international organization devoted to the development of jazz performance and education worldwide and he was recently named United Nations Cultural Ambassador.

Dancer, choreographer and five time Tony nominee, Donald McKayle launched his professional career in 1948, choreographing his first pieces with the New Dance Group at the age of 18. He has been named by the Dance Heritage Coalition "one of America’s Irreplaceable Dance Treasures: the first 100." His choreographic masterworks, considered modern dance classics - *Games*, *Rainbow Round My Shoulder*, *District Storyville*, and *Songs of the Disinherited* are performed around the world. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, and the Lula Washington Dance Theatre, among other notable companies, serve as repositories for his works. He is Artistic Mentor for the Limón Dance Company. In April 2005, Donald McKayle was honored at the John F. Kennedy Center in

Washington, D.C. and presented with a medal as a Master of African American Choreography.

McKayle's career also includes a distinguished career in Broadway, television and film. He began his Broadway career in 1954 performing in *House of Flowers*. Since then, his Broadway credits are extensive both behind and in front of the curtain including being a Tony Award Choreography nominee for *Golden Boy* (1965), *Dr. Jazz* (1975), *Sophisticated Ladies* (1981) as well as for *Raisin* (1974) which also brought him the Musical Director nomination; and in his association as Choreographer for the Best Musical nominee "*It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*."

In television, his credits include, *The Ed Sullivan Show* (1966-1967), *The Bill Cosby Special* (1968) and the 1970 *Oscar Presentations*. In the field of popular music he has choreographed stage acts for singers such as Harry Belafonte and Tina Turner.

He was awarded the title of Claire Trevor Professor of Dance Emeritus at University of California Irvine (UC Irvine), Claire Trevor School of the Arts, Dance Department. McKayle has served on the faculties of the California Institute of the Arts, Julliard School, Connecticut College, Sarah Lawrence College and Bennington College. McKayle is said to be "among the first black men to break the racial barrier by means of modern dance."

Los Angeles based artist, Betye Saar received her B.A in Design in 1964 from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She also studied education and printmaking at University of California, Long Beach. She is best known for her assemblages, three-dimensional collages; in much the same way as her life itself is a collage of diverse influences - African, Irish, American Indian. She watched as Italian-born Simon Rhodia painstakingly built the glittering spires of the Watts Towers when Watts was a racially mixed area in the 1930s. Amazed by how the wet

cement accepted whatever item he pressed into it, she later was driven to place dissimilar objects together and cement their relationships, in a sense “recycling” pre-existing meanings into new possibilities.

Saar has gone on to become one of Los Angeles’ most prolific African American artists of her time. Depicting and challenging racist myths and stereotypes, Saar exhibits political, racial, religious and gender concerns through her multimedia collages, box assemblages, alters and installations consisting of found materials. She continues to challenge the existence of racism. Her 1972 assemblage *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima* shows Aunt Jemima with a broom in one hand and a shotgun in the other. Subsequent series have sought to reveal marginalized or hidden histories; she has examined the social invisibility of black Americans in service-oriented jobs, the construction of racial hierarchies based on skin tone within black communities, and the ways that objects can retain the memories and histories of their owners.

Saar has received numerous awards of distinction, including two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships (1974, 1984), a J. Paul Getty Fund for the Visual Arts Fellowship (1990), and a Flintridge Foundation Visual Artists Award (1998). In 1994, she and artist John Otterbridge represented the United States at the 22nd São Paulo Biennial in Brazil. Her work is represented in numerous museum collections including the Detroit Institute of the Arts, High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Studio Museum in Harlem, Whitney Museum of American Art in New York as well as the collection of the California African American Museum which holds her iconic and world recognized works “Sambo’s Banjo” (1971-72) and “Nine Mojo Secrets” (1971). She continues to be a role model for generations.

“To tribute these cultural icons elevates this night for everyone in the room. Our national treasures, here under our roof being celebrated by their very own, is an exceptional, personal, once-in-a-lifetime experience,” said CAAM Executive Director, Charmaine Jefferson.

Gala chair and Friends Foundation Board chair Susan Cole Hill, added, “The mandate for Friends, the non-profit fund-raising arm of the museum, is essential for a budget -strapped state agency such as CAAM in these difficult economic times but that fundraising task becomes a joy when, through it, we honor three magnetic, dazzling living legends.”

Guests also may look forward to a live performance by Naturally 7, whose coined-term “Vocal Play” reflects their extremely unusual and unbelievable a cappella sound. Members of the group, Roger Thomas, Warren Thomas, Rod Eldridge, Napoleon (Polo) Cummings, Dwight Steward, Garfield Buckey and “Hops” Hutton each use their voices to recreate a different musical instrument from drums to bass to guitars. They have toured with Michael Bublé and made their first TV appearance on the *Ellen Show*. Naturally 7 has opened for Jay Leno in Las Vegas and received a standing ovation at *The BET Honors* for their performance in tribute to honoree Herbie Hancock. The group has toured Europe, Australia and Canada. In 2010, along with Ludacris, Naturally 7 was featured on the title track of Quincy Jones’ new CD *Soul Bossa Nostra*. In June, at the request of Bill Cosby, they made a return appearance performing in the *Playboy Jazz Festival* held at Los Angeles’ famed Hollywood Bowl to standing ovations.

An Artful Evening at CAAM is a fundraiser; proceeds will support CAAM’s programs, exhibitions and collections. For more information, visit www.caamuseum.org or call (213) 744-7432. CAAM is located at 600 State Drive in Exposition Park, Los Angeles, CA, 90037.

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EXHIBITIONS IN THE CAAM GALLERIES:

“Women: Game Changers, Less Known, Here Celebrated” through December, 2011

“The African Diaspora in the Art of Miguel Covarrubias” through February 26, 2012

“Places of Validation, Art & Progression” through April 1, 2012

“Gallery of Discovery” (multi-use education exploration space) ongoing

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 shows on a regular basis. The museum also tours CAAM exhibitions throughout California and the nation.

Located at 600 State Drive in Exposition Park, regular museum public hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm, and Sundays 11am-5pm. Museum admission and workshop participation is always free. Parking in the adjacent lot is \$10.00 all day at Figueroa and 39th Streets. For more information on the California African American Museum visit www.caamuseum.org.

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