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Great Plains Theatre Conference receives Mid-American Arts Alliance Innovations grant

OMAHA, Neb. — Metropolitan Community College's Great Plains Theatre Conference is among a select group of regional artists and presenters to receive a Mid-American Arts Alliance Artistic Innovations grant. This award will support *The Omaha Star* (working title) as part of GPTC's *Neighborhood Tapestries* series to be held during the conference's PlayFest theatre festival, May 28 – June 4, 2016.

Funding for GPTC's M-AAA grant is drawn from generous underwriting by the National Endowment for the Arts and foundations, corporations, and individuals throughout Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas.

M-AAA strengthens and supports artists, cultural organizations and communities throughout its six-state region and beyond. This is achieved primarily through national traveling exhibition programs, innovative leadership development, and strategic grant making. They are especially committed to enriching the cultural life of historically underserved communities by providing high quality, meaningful and accessible arts and culture programs and services. Each year, M-AAA's programs, on average, reach one million people.

Mary Kennedy, M-AAA's chief executive officer said, "GPTC is to be commended for their commitment to serving their community with this distinctive event. Audiences in Omaha will have the opportunity to see the exciting work of PlayFest, many for the first time. Mid-American Arts Alliance is proud to help support this work and GPTC."

The project, a new play by Denise Chapman, is the story of Mildred Brown, the matriarch of Omaha's north side and the founder of the *Omaha Star*, a newspaper that became a channel of communication for Omaha's African American community. The play will be free and open to the public and performed alongside a gallery installation of the same theme.

For more information about Mid-America Arts Alliance, visit them online at www.maaa.org.

About the Great Plains Theatre Conference

Free and open to the public, the conference's mission is to enable playwrights and theatre artists to share time, energy and talent in the service of developing craft, creating new work and strengthening community on a local and national scale. Metropolitan Community College hosts the annual conference that offers extensive opportunities for top emerging playwrights to learn and grow. Through the conference, playwrights connect with one another and in a supporting and encouraging environment, critique one another's work, develop work together and form future creative alliances. The conference is also proud to present PlayFest, a free community theatre festival held each evening of the conference. For more information, visit mccneb.edu/gptc, facebook.com/GreatPlainsTheatreConference or call 402-457-2618.

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Metropolitan Community College, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, is a comprehensive, public community college that offers affordable, quality education to all residents of Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties. Founded in 1974, MCC has the largest enrollment out of six community colleges in Nebraska and is the second largest postsecondary institution in the state. MCC serves more than 40,000 unique credit and noncredit students.