the center for CLASSIC court THEATRE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | Arts

Dear Court Theatre Family,

Welcome to *King Hedley II*, and to Court's 65th season! This will be Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson's eighth time directing a play in August Wilson's American Century Cycle at Court Theatre, and is his first time tackling this powerful work. We're thrilled to be continuing our commitment to staging all of the plays in Wilson's Century Cycle with this piece, knowing that Ron and the talented team of actors and designers have illuminated the themes that continue to make Wilson an enduring voice in the American theatre.

Last season stands as the most successful in Court's history. Our unprecedented "four-star" 2018/19 season included two world premieres, sold-out runs, multiple extensions, and consistent and enthusiastic critical acclaim. This overwhelming response to the art on Court's stage illustrated how crucial classic theatre is in our current moment. It was a glorious year, and it would not have happened without the support of you, our patrons, subscribers and donors.

Our upcoming season is our most ambitious yet. *King Hedley II* is followed by *Oedipus Rex*, which kicks off The Oedipus Trilogy. Next comes Agatha Christie's suspenseful classic, *The Mousetrap*, a visceral take on Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea*, and a rousing, roof-raising production of *The Gospel at Colonus*, which will propel our Oedipus Trilogy forward.

Classic theatre infuses our lives with meaning and awakens us to new understandings. In this coming season, our aim is to connect with the many communities Court Theatre serves in exciting new ways. By drawing on the knowledge of University of Chicago faculty, the passion of our patrons, and the voices of our South Side neighbors, we will show that everyone may find a home in classic theatre—and, by extension, a home at Court Theatre.

Thank you for joining us on this journey!

Sincerely,

Charles Newell
Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director

Angel Ysaguirre
Executive Director

court THEATRE

CHARLES NEWELL
Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director

ANGEL YSAGUIRRE
Executive Director

AUGUST WILSON'S KING HEDLEY II

September 12 - October 13, 2019

DIRECTED BY RESIDENT ARTIST RON OJ PARSON

Scenic Design by Regina García U.S.A.
Costume Design by Alexia Rutherford
Lighting Design by Mike Durst U.S.A.
Sound Design by Christopher M. LaPorte

Casting by Becca McCracken C.S.A.
Martine Kei Green-Rogers, *Production Dramaturg*
Erin Albrecht,* *Production Stage Manager*
Gabriella Welsh,* *Assistant Stage Manager*

SETTING: Pittsburgh, the Hill District, 1985. The back yards of a row of three houses.

There will be a 15-minute intermission.

Be advised: Actors will be using the aisles. This production contains the use of gunshots, electronic smoking devices, and water-based haze.

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Ron OJ Parson's residency is supported by

The Joyce Foundation

August Wilson's *King Hedley II* is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

Originally Produced on Broadway by SAGEWORKS. In December 1999, this production premiered at The Pittsburgh Public Theatre; in February 2000, this production premiered at Seattle Repertory Theatre; additional presentations were mounted at Huntington Theatre Company (Nicholas Martin, Artistic Director; Michael Maso, Managing DIrector), Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum (Gordon Davidson, Artistic Director) and Goodman Theatre (Robert Falls, Artistic Director; Roche Schulfer, Executive Director).

Designers and Scenic Artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, I.A.T.S.E. Local USA829, AFL-CIO,CLC.
*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

CAST

TayLar*.....Ruby
Kierra Bunch.....*Tonya*
Ronald L. Conner*.....*Mister*
Kelvin Roston, Jr.*.....*Hedley*
A.C. Smith*.....*Elmore*
Dexter Zollicoffer*.....*Stool Pigeon*

Understudies: Malcom Banks (King/Mister), Kona N. Burks (Tonya), Renee Lockett (Ruby), and Joseph Primes (Elmore/Stool Pigeon).

*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Director..... Malcom Banks
Fight Director.....Sam Hubbard
Assistant Scenic Designer..... Nick Passafiume
Scenic Artists..... Scott Gerwitz U.S.A, Julie Ruscitti U.S.A, Christina Marie Rainwater U.S.A
Carpenters.....Tony Cooper, Sean Inhat, Sky Fletcher
Assistant Costume Designer..... Elle Erickson
Costume Shop Assistants.....Madeline Byrne, Jody Schmidt
Draper.....Alice Broughton
Wigs.....Christina Carlson
Wardrobe Crew.....Courtney Michele Zimmerman
Assistant Lighting Designer..... Heather Sparling
Assistant Master Electrician..... Raphael Grimes
Electricians..... Arianna Brown, Krystal Martinez, Liz Gomez, Michael Trudeau, Seth Torres, Jason Shivers, Billy Borst
Floor Manager..... Danny Fender
Interim Assistant Production Manager..... Madeline Scott

Scenic Artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, I.A.T.S.E. Local USA829, AFL-CIO,CLC.

Court Theatre performs in the intimate Abelson Auditorium, made possible through a gift from Hope and Lester Abelson.

Cover photo of Kelvin Roston, Jr., by Joe Mazza.

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Court Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. Productions are made possible, in part, by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. Court Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the American Theatre, the League of Resident Theatres, the Illinois Humanities Council, and the League of Chicago Theatres.

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SDC The Director is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.



Working on Wilson

Bringing August Wilson's Words to Life

A.C. Smith, Kelvin Roston, Jr., and TayLar. (Mazza)

For many actors, working on an August Wilson play is a dream come true, a rite of passage, a profound honor. Read on to learn how some of the KING HEDLEY cast feel about performing Wilson's work.

To **Kelvin Roston, Jr. (Hedley)**, working on August Wilson is akin to working on Shakespeare—it requires a skill set that not every actor has. Roston observes that for black male actors, "we see an August Wilson play and see ourselves, our family members, our friends." He says that watching Wilson's plays exposed him to characters like Floyd Barton (*Seven Guitars*), Youngblood (*Jitney*), and Hedley (*King Hedley II*), and made him excited about the prospect of aging into these roles. "August Wilson has written us from the inside, unfiltered. He not only shows who we are, but also the why. It's very specific; no matter the year it's set, it remains relevant."

Performing in an August Wilson play has been a lifelong goal of **Kierra Bunch (Tonya)**. "Tackling *King Hedley* and being a part of this experience is exciting," she says. "It's exciting to actually get an opportunity to step into the work of a true visionary and one of the greatest storytellers of our times. Wilson writes about the human condition and anyone can find their own story in this play."

"We see an August Wilson play and see ourselves, our family members, our friends."

Dexter Zollicoffer (Stool Pigeon) feels that acting in an August Wilson play is an artistic rite of passage. "When working on Wilson, you feel like you're paying homage to the struggles and joys of being black in America," he says. Dexter thinks that "by exploring the nuances of this specific community in 1985, it better prepares us for the racial and cultural dynamics at play today."

One of the things that excites **Ronald L. Conner (Mister)** most about being in this play is the opportunity to showcase an unconventional family bound by blood, friendship, and proximity. "Working on an August Wilson play means an opportunity to give voice to the marginalized, working class of America," he reflects. "It means I get to tell a universal story through a culturally specific lens." To Ronald, the themes and issues raised in *King Hedley II* are quite timely. "Audiences need to see this play now, because it *is* 'now!'" ■



A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR AND RESIDENT ARTIST

RON OJ PARSON

Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Othello, and King Lear...

Troy Maxson, Levee Green, Floyd Barlow, Harold Loomis, and King Hedley II...

Tragedies, with tragic figures, written by two great playwrights. Tragic characters brought to life who are as relevant today as when they were written, perhaps even more so.

With *King Hedley II*, August ties it all together; he lets Aunt Ester's spirit continue to live. Unfortunately, the world we live in today is still filled with turbulence all around us, and we strive to survive in it. It is a protracted struggle that continues to drive us to battle and fight to the end.

What an honor it is to work on my 31st August Wilson production, and my first production of *King Hedley II* at my home theatre, Court, where I have been blessed to have directed many of my August Wilson productions.

King battles against the odds like so many of us have to, and will continue to do so until the battle is won, and the pressures of being Black in America are overcome.

> "King Hedley II is the son of Ruby, a figure in my play *Seven Guitars*. This one's set in the '80s, when you have all this violence and these kids with guns running around. I'm exploring three generations trying to cope with the breakdown of civility in the black community."
>
> —August Wilson



Ron OJ Parson
Resident Artist, Court Theatre

Photo of Ron OJ Parson (Mazza)

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(1931–2019)

David was a generous, loyal, and enthusiastic friend to Court Theatre. He will be remembered and missed by all of us here at Court.

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

–William Shakespeare, The Tempest

Photo by Jason Smith/University of Chicago

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THE LIFE BEHIND THE SENTENCE

By Carroll Bogert

King Hedley II, like any great work of art, raises issues that are broad, deep, and universal: can people ever escape their past? Can love triumph over betrayal? What is religious faith in the face of relentless misfortune? What does it mean to be a real man?

But *King Hedley II* also raises issues that are specific to the life of African American people in 20th century America. It delves into one of the central, beating issues for racial justice in 21st century America, too: the enduring inequities of our criminal justice system.

King has recently returned from seven years in prison as the play opens, but we sense that he still lives in confinement. His options seem constrained not only by his criminal past—he's plainly guilty of the crime for which he did time—but by the code of honor that governs behavior in Pittsburgh's Hill District. "They got everything stacked up against you as it is," says King. And "they" seems to stand for the world at large.

But King is also noting a trend in social policy that quickly spun out of control. By the mid-1980s, when this play is set, mass incarceration was already on the rise. When Ronald Reagan took office, the total prison population was 329,000. By the time he left eight years later, it had nearly doubled to 627,000. He declared a "war on drugs," warned of a "crack epidemic," and signed into law a federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act that established mandatory minimums for drug offenses for the first time. That ominous legislation would soon fill America's prisons and jails with young men of color.

"They got everything stacked up against you as it is." **—King, *King Hedley II***

It also kept them there: in the mid-1980s, more than half of the people getting out of prison were rearrested within the first year. Even today, more than two million people are living behind bars in

CONTINUED ON P 12

this country—but more than seven million live under some form of supervision, such as probation or parole. And a shocking 70 million Americans have some kind of criminal record.

The world of crime and punishment pulls inexorably on *King Hedley II*. Though we, the audience, never see a police officer on stage, we feel their threatening presence looming over the characters. Ruby insists that "the police gonna find out" if King trangresses, because "the police know everything." King retorts that the police "ain't found out who killed Little Buddy Will" or who committed arson in the neighborhood. This interchange should ring true to audiences at Court Theater: the Chicago Police Department's rate of solving murders remains stubbornly below 20 percent.

Law professor Michelle Alexander argues that the so-called "war on drugs" is a thinly-veiled attempt to perpetuate slavery and white racial dominance, using the tool of criminal justice to control and suppress black people. Her book, *The New Jim Crow*, has become a top seller in recent years. But the racism entrenched in every aspect of the criminal justice system was nothing new to the people of Pittsburgh's Hill District. "If a burglar break into a white man's house to steal his TV and the white man shoot him they don't say he wrong," says King. "They pat him on the back and tell him to go on home."

Public opinion about criminal justice is shifting today. Prison populations have fallen by about 10 percent in the last decade, and in 2018 the US Congress passed the first significant criminal justice reform bill in decades. Both Republicans and Democrats speak of the need for reform. The issue arises in presidential debates, where candidates hasten to criticize their rivals' support for harsh criminal justice policies in the past. The proportion of African-American people in the prison population has fallen slightly in recent years. That's good. But in order to match the incarceration rate for whites, it will have to keep sinking at the current rate for another 100 years. *That's* the deeper truth that August Wilson wants us to see. ■

Carroll Bogert is president of The Marshall Project. Bogert was previously deputy executive director at Human Rights Watch, running its award-winning global media operations. Before joining Human Rights Watch in 1998, Bogert spent twelve years as a foreign correspondent for *Newsweek* in China, Southeast Asia, and the Soviet Union.



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Q&A Introducing Sarah Marmor

Chair of the Producers' Circle

This season, we are excited to announce new leadership for the Producers' Circle, the society of Court's most loyal, engaged donors. Trustee Sarah Marmor is the first-ever Chair of the Producers' Circle. Read on to learn more about Sarah's engagement with Court, and her plans for enhancing the intellectual and artistic experience our Producers' Circle members enjoy.



Photo of Sarah Marmor and Cheryl Cooke by Percy Ollie.

Sarah, you have been a Trustee on Court's Board since 2017. Can you tell us about that experience?

My role as a Trustee is one of the most satisfying parts of my life. I am incredibly proud to be associated with Court Theatre both because of the quality of the work and because of the talent of the people who work there. Everyone is rowing in the same direction; everyone is committed to putting on great, challenging, and intellectually satisfying work, and that value permeates the organization. My job as a Trustee is mostly to stay out of the way and answer the call when there is something I can do to help advance the mission of this wonderful place.

You're the first Chair of the Producers' Circle! What excites you about your new role leading this group of Court's most loyal patrons?

Three things. First, I get to spread the word about Court to people who may not be aware of this gem. Second, I get to help plan wonderful events for Producers' Circle members—we have big plans for enhancing the Producers' Circle experience this year and for years to come. Third, I'm excited to connect with fellow arts patrons who are interested in getting a deeper grounding in the plays Court is producing. We are so lucky to be affiliated with a world-class academic institution like the University of Chicago, and take advantage of that intellectual firepower for our programs. It makes for some really engaging and enlightening events.

What do you enjoy about Producers' Circle events?

I learn so much from these events. For *Photograph 51* last year, several female scientists from the University talked to us about Rosalind Franklin and women in the sciences. It was moving to hear these talented women put Franklin's struggles, and triumphs into perspective. I loved learning more about neuroscience at the event for *Frankenstein*, and the demonstration we got from Manual Cinema made me realize that puppetry hardly describes the amazing, groundbreaking, creative work they do. And, I went into the *Augie March* event knowing nothing about the book and having only the vaguest sense of what I would be seeing a month later. I came out realizing just how ambitious that production was, and it was thrilling to see those ambitions so successfully realized just a few weeks later. I have never been sorry I attended a Producers' Circle event; I always leave having learned something new and these events always enhance my experience of the plays.

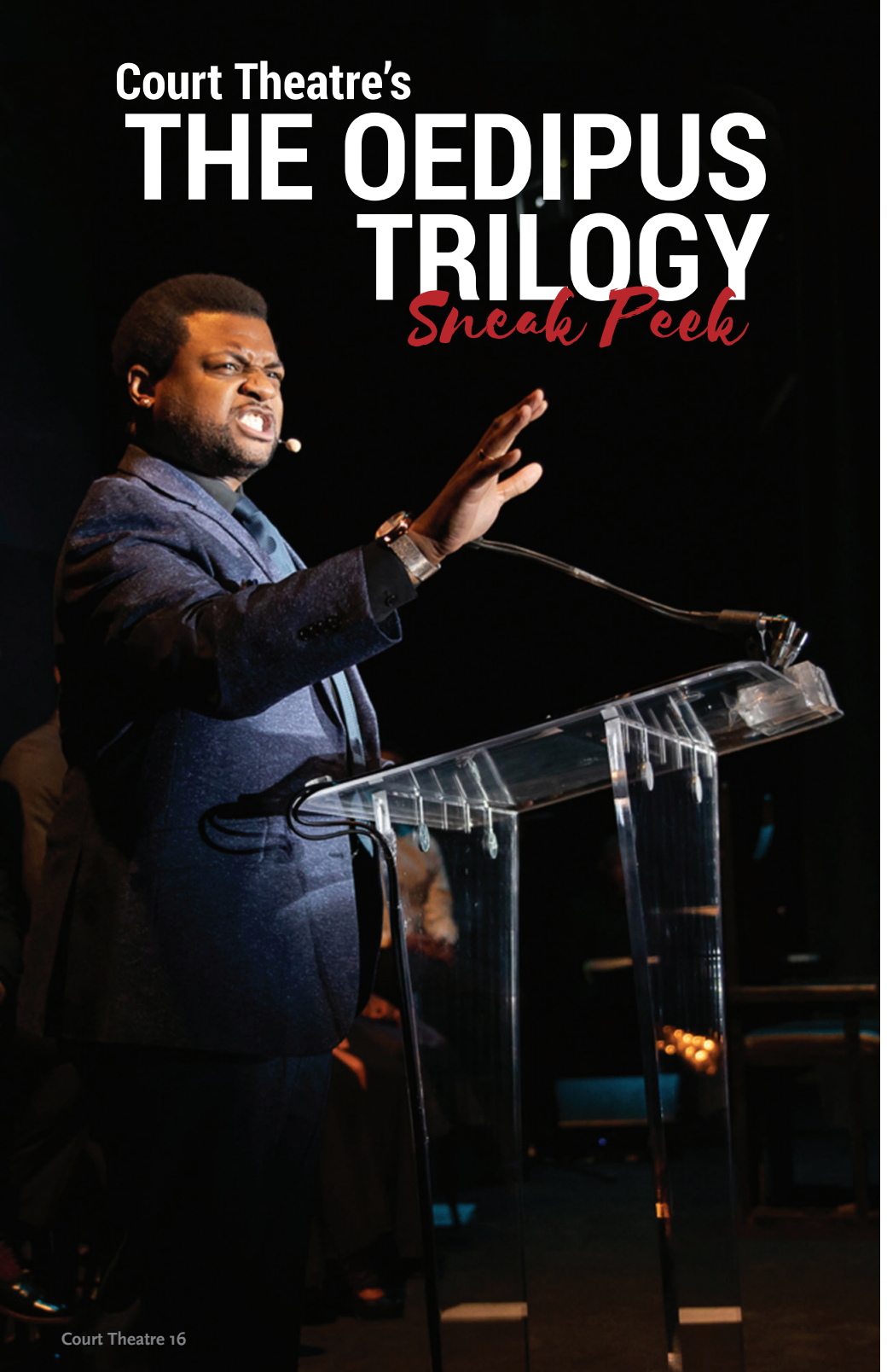
What plans do you have for expanding and growing the Producers' Circle?

We have big plans. Our aim is to expand the offerings, make even more use of University of Chicago professors as speakers, and think up new, fun, and creative programs. We have listened to some current members and will enhance the benefits of membership, including inviting all members to our opening night pre-show and post-show events. If you love the theatre, if you want access to world-class thinkers and a grounding in the big ideas that distinguish Court's productions, if you want to join a community of like-minded enlightened people, the Producers' Circle is for you. ■

To learn more about joining the Producers' Circle, contact Andrew Berg, Director of Development, at (773) 834-3305 or aberg@uchicago.edu.

Court Theatre's THE OEDIPUS TRILOGY

Sneak Peek



The Oedipus Trilogy is a multi-season journey that allows audiences to explore the recurring themes of fate, redemption, and justice in Sophocles's works and in the world at large. Conversations between Court artists, scholars at the University of Chicago, and community members from Chicago's South Side will inform each production of the trilogy, which includes *Oedipus Rex* (Nov-Dec, 2019); *The Gospel at Colonus* (May-June, 2020); and *Antigone* (Nov-Dec, 2020).

In conjunction with The Oedipus Trilogy, Court has partnered with a host of organizations, including Illinois Humanities' Odyssey Project and Sojourner Scholars, Stony Island Arts Bank, the Hall and Greater Grand Crossing branches of the Chicago Public Library, and Bright Star Church to create a dynamic opportunities for students and communities to engage with all three plays in The Oedipus Trilogy.

Book groups will be facilitated at libraries across the city in which participants will read the texts of the trilogy and convene for community conversations in Rogers Park, Bronzeville, Pilsen, Greater Grand Crossing, Roseland and other neighborhoods.

Court also is offering its patrons the opportunity to join a book group for The Oedipus Trilogy! Over the course of four meetings, you will join others to discuss the text of *Oedipus Rex*, view a performance of the play, and then explore the themes through the lens of Court's production. These discussions will be moderated by Nicole Bond, an Odyssey Project alum, and Sarah Nooter, a Professor in the Department of Classics here at the University of Chicago who has written extensively about Greek theatre and poetry.



Interested in signing up for The Oedipus Trilogy Book Group? Learn more at **CourtTheatre.org/bookclub**

Photo: Kelvin Roston, Jr. in Court's gala performance of *The Gospel at Colonus*. (Jensen)

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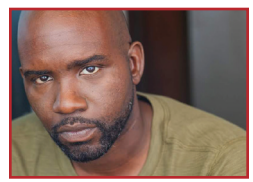
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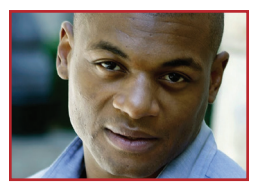
TAYLAR *(Ruby)* is excited to make her Court Theatre debut! A local and regional actress, TayLar's performances include Goodman Theatre's *Sweat*, *The Little Foxes*, *Ruined*, *The Convert*, *Mary*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone,* and *The Cook*. She has also worked at: Eclipse; Asolo Repertory, Manhattan Theatre Club, Writers, Steppenwolf, Black Ensemble, and ETA. Television appearances include: *Chicago PD*, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, and *Empire*. Feature film credits include: *Southside With You*, *Teacher*, and *Ms. White Light*. She also can be seen in numerous television commercials. TayLar is represented by Shirley Hamilton Talent.



KIERRA BUNCH (*Tonya*) is thrilled to be working on *King Hedley II*. Most recently, Kierra was in Windy City Playhouse's *Southern Gothic*, Lookingglass Theatre's *Plantation*, and has worked with many other companies in Chicago, notably, Urban Theater Company, Black Ensemble Theater, and eta Creative Arts (Black Theater Alliance Awards nominations: Best New Actress and Best Performance in an Ensemble). Kierra was a series regular on the Emmy Award-winning children's television show, *Green Screen Adventures*. She's appeared on *Chicago Med*, in a recurring role on FOX's *Empire*, and will appear in the sitcom *South Side* on Comedy Central. Kierra is represented by Paonessa Talent.



RONALD L. CONNER (*Mister*) has worked with Court on *Seven Guitars* and *The Piano Lesson*. Chicago credits: *Jitney* and *King Hedley II* (Congo Square Theatre, Ensemble Member); *A View From the Bridge*, *Father Comes Home…*, and *Sweat* (Goodman); *Pipeline* (Victory Gardens); *SS! Twelfth Night* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); and *Paradise Blue* (TimeLine). Regional credits: St. Louis Black Repertory Company, Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, Portland Stage Company, Olney Theatre, and Geva Theatre of Rochester. Television and film credits include *South Side* (Comedy Central); *The Chi* (Showtime); *Empire* (FOX); *Sirens* (USA); *Chicago PD* and *Chicago Med* (NBC); and *Chasing the Blues*. Ron is represented by Paonessa Talent.



KELVIN ROSTON JR. *(Hedley)* is grateful to be in this production! Court credits: *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Seven Guitars*, *Porgy and Bess*, and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Chicagoland: Congo Square, Paramount, Marriott Theatre, Goodman, ITC, eta Creative Arts, Writers, Black Ensemble, TimeLine, Northlight, Steppenwolf. Regional: The Black Rep, Fulton, New Theatre, MSMT, Baltimore Center Stage, Mosaic, Apollo. International: Orb (Tokyo, Japan), Festival Hall (Osaka, Japan). Television: *Chicago Med*, *Chicago PD*, KFC, Instant Care, Ace Hardware. Film: *Get a Job*, *Princess Cyd*, and *Breathing Room*. Awards: Jeff Award, three BTA Awards, two Black Excellence Awards, and a NAMI Award. AEA, Paonessa Talent.

PROFILES

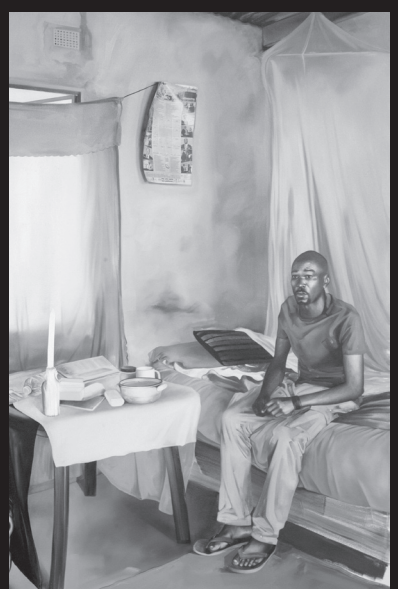


A.C. SMITH *(Elmore)* returns to Court, where he has appeared many times, receiving a Jeff Award for playing Troy Maxson in *Fences*. Regional: Writers, Clarence Brown Theatre, Portland Stage Company, Actors Theater of Louisville, Milwaukee Rep, Kansas City Rep, Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, Indiana Rep, Geva Theatre Center, Peninsula Players, and The Black Rep where he's a company member and won nine Woodie King Jr. Awards. National tours: *The Piano Lesson* directed by Lloyd Richards. Off-Broadway: *Jelly Belly* (Adelco Award nomination, New Federal Theatre). Smith has appeared in film, TV, radio, voice-overs, commercials, and *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. He's represented by Paonessa Talent.



DEXTER ZOLLICOFFER *(Stool Pigeon)* has appeared at Court Theatre in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Electra*, *Water by the Spoonful*, and *The Mystery Cycle: The Creation* and *The Passion*. He has been a Chicago actor for the past thirty years. Other credits include *Charm* for Northlight Theatre, receiving a Jeff Award for Actor in a Principle Role. TV appearances include *Joe Pera Talks to You*, *Chicago Med*, *Chicago Fire*, *Detroit 1-8-7*, and the upcoming *South Side* on Comedy Central. He is also an administrator at DePaul's Theatre School.

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Meleko Mokgosi, *Bread, Butter, and Power* (detail), 2018. Courtesy the artist and Honor Fraser, Los Angeles. Photo © Monica Nouwens.

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MALCOM BANKS (*Understudy*) was nominated for Best Actor in the Midwest Film Festival in 2014 for his role in the film *Offsides*. Other film and TV credits include NBC's *Chicago PD*, *Black and Privileged*, and *Side Effects*. Malcom wrote and directed the dark thriller, *7vens Law*, available on Amazon. He was part of the Jeff-recommended cast of *Jitney* at Congo Square Theater, where he performed the role of Youngblood.

KONA N. BURKS (*Understudy*) is excited to work at Court again. Chicago: *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Harvey* (Court); *The Snowy Day* (Emerald City); *The Grapes of Wrath* (The Gift); *Domesticated*, *How Long Will I Cry* (Steppenwolf); *Heaven*, *How I Got Here* (Provision); *Good People* (Redtwist); *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning* (Steppenwolf Garage); *Small* (Open Door Repertory); *Intimate Apparel*, *Crumbs From the Table of Joy* (Illinois Theatre Center); *Levi James*, *The Trip*, *A Fool Such As I* (eta). She attended The School at Steppenwolf, holds a bachelor's from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a master's from UIC. She is a member of SAG-AFTRA.

RENEE LOCKETT (*Understudy*) is thrilled to work with Court Theatre for the first time. With the exception of the 22 years she spent raising her urchin, she's spent the majority of the last four decades on or around stages in Chicago. Some of her past theatrical haunts include Black Ensemble, eta Creative Arts, X-Bag, Victory Gardens, MPAACT, Collaboraction, Fleetwood-Jourdain, 3-Cat, Prologue, Babes with Blades, Childs Play, Redtwist, Northlight, and Steppenwolf. Look for her on the small screen on *The Chi* and *South Side*. She's grateful to her God for the chance to be a working actor. Renee is represented by DDO Artists Agency.

AUGUST WILSON *(Playwright,* 1945–2005) authored *King Hedley II*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *Radio Golf*, and *Gem of the Ocean*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theatres across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987) and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; as well as seven New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, *Jitney*, and *Radio Golf*. Additionally, the cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. Mr. Wilson's early works included the one-act plays *The Janitor, Recycle, The Coldest Day of the Year, Malcolm X, The Homecoming,* and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*. Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, the 2003 Heinz Award, a 1999 National Humanities Medal, and numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the

American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theatre located at 245 West 52nd Street—The August Wilson Theatre. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.



RON OJ PARSON *(Resident Artist/Director)* hails from Buffalo, New York and is a graduate of The University of Michigan's Professional Theatre Program. He is the Resident Artist of Court Theatre, and co-founder and former Artistic Director of Onyx Theatre. Ron is a Company Member of TimeLine Theatre, and an associate artist at Teatro Vista and Writers Theatre. Ron has worked at various theatres in Chicago and across the United States and Canada. He is a member of SAG-AFTRA, SDC, and Actors Equity. Visit www.ronojparson.com.

REGINA GARCIA *(Scenic Design)* designed the premieres of *Native Son* and *Seven Guitars* at Court. She has long-standing relationships with the Latinx Theatre Commons and its renowned *Teatros* including Repertorio Español, the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater, Teatro Vista, and Pregones Theater. Recently completed projects include: Merrimack Repertory Theatre; Oregon Shakespeare Festival, American Players Theatre, and The Denver Center for the Performing Arts. Regina is a Fellow of the NEA/TCG Development Program for Designers and the Princess Grace Awards, USA; and a Regional Associate member of the League of Professional Theatre Women. She teaches at The Theatre School at DePaul University. Visit www.Garciaportfolio.com.

ALEXIA RUTHERFORD *(Costume Design)* is delighted to design for Court for the first time. Previous design credits include *Black Pearl, Sammy!*, and *Hail, Hail, Chuck Berry* (Black Theatre Alliance Award) for Black Ensemble Theatre; *Too Heavy for Your Pocket* for TimeLine Theatre, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Double Trouble* (Jeff Award Nominated), and *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* for Porchlight Music Theatre; *A Loss of Roses* for Raven Theatre, *Sender* for A Red Orchid Theatre, *Four Women* for the Chicago Humanities Festival, *Thom Pain* for Theater Wit, and *Grimm* for The Chicago High School for the Arts.

MIKE DURST *(Lighting Designer)* is a Chicago-based lighting designer and Red Orchid ensemble member. Previously for Court: *The Belle of Amherst*. Off-Broadway: Primary Stages, 59e59, Cherry Lane. National Tours: *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia "The Nightman Cometh."* Chicago: Goodman, Lookingglass, A Red Orchid, TimeLine, The Hypocrites, Theater Wit, Remy Bumppo, Windy City Playhouse, and more. Regional: McCarter Theatre, Huntington Theatre, Olney Theatre, Cardinal Stage, and Detroit Public Theatre. Mike lectures about Lighting Design at UChicago. He's received Jeff awards, L.A.'s Ovation award, and San Diego's Craig Noel award. Mike is a member of IATSE Local 2 and United Scenic Artists 829. Visit MikeDurst.com.

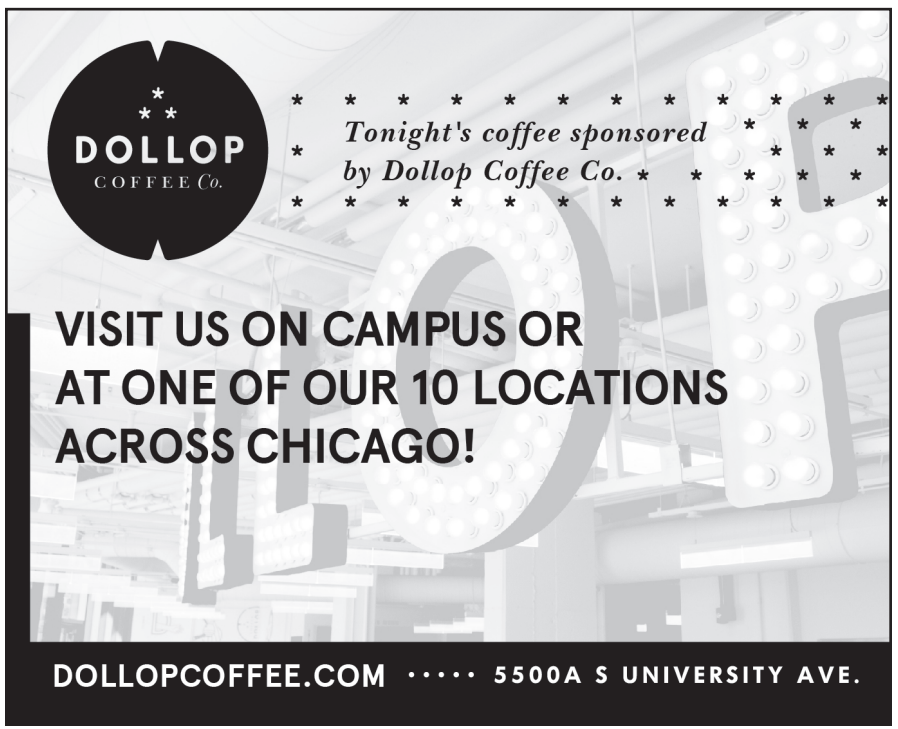
CHRISTOPHER M. LAPORTE *(Sound Designer)* designed *Radio Golf*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, and *The Belle of Amherst* at Court. Chicago Shakespeare: A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Peter Pan*, *Macbeth*, *Madagascar*, *Sense and Sensibility* (associate designer), *Shakespeare in Love* (associate designer). Chicago: *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, *Hard Times*, *Life Sucks*, *Treasure Island* (associate, Lookingglass); *Into the Woods*, *Next to Normal*, *Parade*, *Trevor* (associate designer, Writers); *Indecent*, *Fun Home* (associate designer, Victory Gardens); *You for Me for You* (Sideshow). Regional: *Indecent* (Arena Stage); *Vietgone*, *Lookingglass Alice* (associate designer, Denver Center for the Performing Arts); *Twisted Melodies* (Baltimore Center Stage); *Sense and Sensibility* (associate sound designer, Old Globe).

MARTINE KEI GREEN-ROGERS *(Production Dramaturg)* is an Assistant Professor at SUNY New Paltz and the President of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas. Her dramaturgical credits include: *Radio Golf*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Blues for An Alabama Sky*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Seven Guitars*, *The Mountaintop*, *Home*, and *Porgy and Bess* at Court Theatre; *Sweat* at Goodman; *Hairspray*, *The Book of Will*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *UniSon*, *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo*, *Comedy of Errors*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Fences* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.



ERIN ALBRECHT *(Production Stage Manager)* Previously at Court: *The Adventures of Augie March*; *For Colored Girls*; *Photograph 51*; *Frankenstein*; *Radio Golf*; *The Originalist*; *All My Sons*; *The Belle of Amherst*; *Five Guys Named Moe*; *Harvey*; *Blues for an Alabama Sky*; *Man in the Ring*; *One Man, Two Guvnors*; *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; *Agamemnon*; *The Good Book*; and *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Erin has worked Off-Broadway, regionally, and toured throughout Europe. She holds a Bachelor of Music from The Catholic University of America and a MFA in Stage Management from Virginia Tech. She's an adjunct instructor of Stage Management at The Theater School at DePaul University.

GABRIELLA WELSH *(Assistant Stage Manager)* has previously worked at Court on *For Colored Girls*, *Frankenstein*, *Radio Golf*, *The Belle of Amherst*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Electra*, and *Man in the Ring*. Around Chicago, Gabriella has worked for About Face Theatre, American Blues Theater, Chicago Children's Theatre, Emerald City Theatre, Griffin Theatre, The Hypocrites, The Neo-Futurists, The Ruffians, Pride Films and Plays, SideShow Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, TimeLine Theatre, and Writers Theatre as well as Actors Theatre of Louisville in Kentucky. Gabriella is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.





CHARLES NEWELL *(Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director)* has been Artistic Director of Court Theatre since 1994, where he has directed over 50 productions. Recent Court highlights include *The Adventures of Augie March; All My Sons*; *The Hard Problem*; *Man in the Ring*; and *Satchmo at the Waldorf*. Charlie has directed at Goodman, Guthrie Theater, Arena Stage, John Houseman's The Acting Company, Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Glimmerglass, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Awards received include the SDCF Zelda Fichandler Award, the TCG Alan Schneider Award, and the League of Chicago Theatres' Artistic Achievement Award. Charlie has been nominated for 16 Jeff Awards, winning four times.



ANGEL YSAGUIRRE *(Executive Director)* most recently served as Executive Director of Illinois Humanities. During his tenure there, the organization established a number of new programs demonstrating the contribution that the humanities can make in addressing today's most pressing challenges. Previously, he was the Director of Global Community Investing at The Boeing Company and a program officer at the McCormick Tribune Foundation. He has served on the boards of the Theatre Communications Group, Donors Forum of Chicago, the Illinois Center for the Book, Horizons Community Services, Blair Thomas and Company, and Next Theatre.



NORA TITONE *(Resident Dramaturg)* is the author of the 19th-century theater history *My Thoughts Be Bloody: The Bitter Rivalry of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth* (Simon & Schuster, 2010). As a dramaturg and historical researcher, Titone has collaborated with a range of artists and scholars including playwright Anna Deavere Smith and historian Doris Kearns Goodwin. She also contributed to projects at Arena Stage and DreamWorks Studios. Titone studied history at Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley, and is represented by ICM Partners.



BECCA McCRACKEN *(Casting Director)* is a Chicago theatre fanatic. Casting credits include American Blues, Asolo Rep, Florida Studio, Infusion, Indiana Festival, Indiana Rep, Lyric Opera, Madison Rep, Milwaukee Rep, New Theatre, Paramount, Provision, Silk Road Rising, Syracuse Stage, Writers, *Spamilton, Million Dollar Quartet, Old Jews Telling Jokes, Evil Dead: The Musical, Working, Dee Snyder's Rock & Roll Christmas,* and *Mozart the Rock Opera.* National Tours: *How To Train Your Dragon, Peter Pan,* and *Sister Act*. She is an Artios Award winner for her casting of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's *Carousel*. Her casting career also spans into television, film, and commercial. ■

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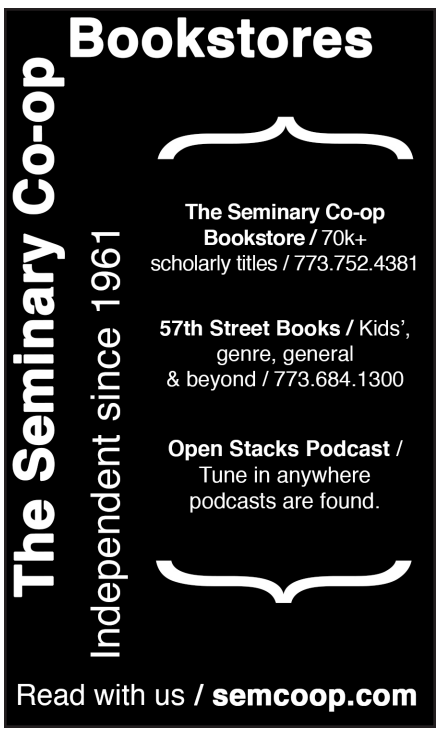
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The Field Museum
Jeanne Gang
Good Measure
Helaine and Peter Heydemann
Kevin Hochberg and James McDaniel
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Lula Café
Lyric Opera of Chicago
Sarah Marmor
Joan Neal and David Weisbach
Charles Newell and Kate Collins
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Erika Nolan
Ron OJ Parson
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Porchlight Music Theatre
The Second City
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Shedd Aquarium
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The Saints

SPECIAL GIFTS

Tribute Gifts

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Ms. Leanne Star
Thomas and Barbara Weil



STAFF

Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director	Charles Newell
Executive Director	Angel Ysaguirre
Associate Producer	Regina Victor
Resident Artist	Ron OJ Parson
Resident Dramaturg	Nora Titone
Casting Director	Becca McCracken, C.S.A.
Artistic Fellow	Gabrielle Randle
Managing Director	Heidi Thompson Saunders
General Manager	Zachary Davis
Executive Assistant	Lauren Kincaid-Filbey
Community Programs Manager	Aaron Mays
Director of Education	Patrese D. McClain
Education Associates/Teaching Artists	Adia Alli, Brianna Buckley, Kona Burks, Jennifer Glasse, Abby Pierce, Michael Aaron Pogue, Zoe Rosenfeld
Teaching Artists	Chanell Bell, Andi Earles, David Goodloe, Nevada Montgomery, Courtney O'Neill, Dorian Sylvain, Jay Worthington
Director of Production	Jennifer Gadda
Assistant Production Mgr and Company Mgr	Kelcie Beene
Technical Director	Luke Lemanski
Assistant Technical Director	Christopher Walls
Properties Manager	Lara Musard
Costume Shop Manager	Erica Friesen
Wardrobe Supervisor	Jody Schmidt
Master Electrician	Emily Brown
Sound and Video Supervisor	Josh McCammon
Director of Development	Andrew Berg
Special Events Manager	Qiana Moore-Nightengale
Institutional Relations Manager	Rod Gingrich
Development Assistant	Lauren Sheely
Director of Marketing	Traci Brant
Associate Director of Marketing	Brent Ervin-Eickhoff
Public Relations	Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.
Director of Audience Services	Matthew P. Sitz
Box Office and Ticketing Software Manager	Heather Dumdei
Assistant Box Office Managers	Nicole Bond, Jen Luke
Box Office Assistant	Claudia Chirio
House Manager	Nick E. Johnson
Bartender	Hugh Graham
Volunteer Ushers	Courtesy of The Saints
Volunteer Coordinator	Judd Rinsema

HOSPITALITY PARTNERS

Dining Partners: Court patrons receive 10% off at Chant, Mesler, The Nile, Piccolo Mondo, and Seven Ten, and 12% off at Nella with their ticket stub on the night of the show. *One discount per ticket. Not valid with other offers.*

CHANT
chantchicago.com

NELLA PIZZA & PASTA
nellachicago.com

RESTAURANT piccolo mondo
piccolomondo.us

MESLER KITCHEN / BAR / LOUNGE
sophyhotel.com/mesler-kitchen

THE NILE HYDE PARK
nilerestaurantofhydepark.com

SEVEN TEN LOUNGE
seventenchicago.com

La Petite Folie offers a prix fixe menu for Court patrons.

la petite folie HYDE PARK
lapetitefolie.com

The Promontory offers a wine pairing with each entree for Court patrons.

THE PROMONTORY HEARTH | BAR | MUSIC
promontorychicago.com

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dollopcoffee.com

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57th & Blackstone
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chicagolandrefreshments.com

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