

NEWS RELEASE

UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center www.fineartscenter.com

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 17, 2008

WHAT: Fine Arts Center Director Dr. Willie Hill Honored by Alma Mater

GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY NAMES DR. WILLIE HILL TO ALUMNI HALL OF FAME

Dr. Willie Hill, Director of the UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center, has been named to the Alumni Hall of Fame for his college Alma Mater, Grambling State University. Grambling State University celebrates the accomplishments of exceptional alumni who make substantial and unique contributions to society and the university. These contributions demonstrate outstanding leadership and foresight and are recognized in local, national and or international communities. Alumni are honored for achievement in scholarly activities, research, leadership, volunteerism, philanthropy, and service to the university. UMass Amherst Provost Charlena Seymour congratulated Dr. Hill on the award, saying, "Willie Hill has brought distinction and honor to UMass through his service on the faculty and as Director of the Fine Arts Center. On behalf of the UMass community, I compliment him on this well-deserved recognition."

Dr. Hill is Director of the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a Professor in Music Education. He is past President of MENC: The National Association for Music Education; past President of IAJE: The International Association for Jazz Education; and, currently, Chairman of the Society for Jazz Education of MENC. He received his B.S. degree from Grambling State University and earned M.M. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Colorado-Boulder. Dr. Hill was a Professor in Music Education, and the Assistant Dean at the College of Music at the University of Colorado-Boulder for eleven years; and, Director of Education for the Thelonious Monk Institute in Los Angeles, California. Prior to his tenure at the University of Colorado, Hill taught instrumental music for 16 years and served as instrumental music supervisor for four years in the Denver Public Schools.

Dr. Hill was the recipient of the prestigious Lawrence Berk Leadership Award presented by the International Association for Jazz Education. In 1998, he was inducted into the Colorado Music Educators Hall of Fame. A national artist/clinician for Yamaha Musical Instrument Company, he is co-author of Learning to Sight-Read Jazz, Rock, Latin, and Classical Styles (Ardsley House Publication), the author of The Instrumental History of Jazz (N2K, Inc.), Approaching the Standards (Warner Brothers Publication, 1999); and

Jazz Pedagogy: The Jazz Educator's Handbook and Resource Guide (Warner Brothers Publication, 2002). Hill is listed in the first edition of Who's Who among Black Americans and Who's Who among International Musicians. In 2000, he was honored with the Jazz Education Achievement Award by Downbeat Magazine.

Dr. Hill has performed with the Denver Symphony Orchestra, Ice Capades, Ice Follies and with such luminaries as George Burns, Liza Minnelli, Lena Horne, Ben Vereen, Lola Falana, Barbara McNair, Arturo Sandoval, Johnny Mathis, Trini Lopez, Grover Washington, Jr., Jon Faddis, James Moody, Sammy Davis, Jr., Debbie Reynolds, Grover Washington, Jr., The New York Voices, Stevie Wonder, The 5th Dimension, The Four Tops, The Temptations, Gladys Knight and the Pips and many others. He has also performed in the orchestras of Nelson Riddle, Chuck Mangione, and Pat Williams as well as the big bands of Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, Rich Matteson, Rob McConnell, and Woody Herman.

Grambling State University was founded in 1901 and offers degrees in seventy-two disciplines, graduate and undergraduate, in four colleges and three schools. Grambling State University Alumni are recognized nationally and internationally as exceptional individuals performing or having performed, extraordinary feats within and beyond their areas of study and practice. These are the graduates that Grambling State University celebrates by bestowing them with the honor of induction in their "rightful place," The Grambling State University Hall of Fame, Gallery of Distinction.

Photos of Dr. Hill are available for download at <http://www.umass.edu/fac/director/photographs.html>.

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