

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 27, 2009

CONTACT: Maiben Beard, maiben.beard@auburn.edu, 334-844-4946

ARTS AND HUMANITIES LEADERSHIP SUMMIT TO BE HOSTED AT AU

Auburn, Ala. – On June 25, 2009, the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University, Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, Alabama Museums Association and Alabama Humanities Foundation will sponsor a summit on the role of Alabama’s cultural, arts and humanities organizations. Participants will discuss what the arts and humanities bring to civic life and the impact of current economic conditions on their viability and future.

Charles McCrary, president and CEO of Alabama Power Company and a member of the Auburn University Board of Trustees, will kick off the summit at 10 a.m. at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art with a keynote address.

The summit will convene directors, staff and boards of Alabama museums, historical sites, performing arts centers, libraries and other institutions devoted to public education, culture and the arts and humanities. The interested public is invited to register and attend.

According to Dr. Anna Gramberg, dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University and summit sponsor, the gathering is intended to foster discussion about the role of the arts and humanities in civic life.

“Alabama boasts some of the richest cultural and educational resources in the nation and it is incumbent upon us to ask how they are used, how they are supported and how access to them can be maximized,” Gramberg said. “These are especially important questions in times of economic hardship.”

Following McCrary’s address, Ed Bridges of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Al Head of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, T. C. Coley of the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center, Gail Andrews of the Birmingham Museum of Art, B. B. Comer Memorial Library (Sylacauga) director Shirley Spears and Alabama Humanities Foundation director Robert Stewart will respond. A question and answer session will conclude the gathering.

While arts, humanities and cultural institutions are often the first to feel the budget pinch, for many states, cultural tourism, including the arts, theater and historical sites, makes an important contribution to the economy. “The summit will give us a chance to look at what that means in Alabama and talk about how we can come together to improve everyone’s bottom line,” Gramberg said and added, “Of course, we are also

turning out graduates who will seek jobs and a high quality of life, which includes opportunities for enrichment, education and entertainment. Unless we can imagine life without books, music, heritage sites or theater, it is important that we talk about where we are and where we want to be in the future.”

To register for the summit or for more information, go to www.jscm.auburn.edu/summit or call the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities in the College of Liberal Arts at 334-844-4946. Registration is \$20 and includes lunch. Seating is limited and early registration is encouraged.