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City of Philadelphia

Press Release

A new chapter unfolds in Philadelphia Education with the addition of national Author & Advocate to SRC.

Mayor Nutter names Art Sanctuary founder, Lorene Cary to Philadelphia's School Reform Commission.

Philadelphia PA, October 11, 2011: - Mayor Michael A. Nutter has appointed Lorene Cary, a respected novelist, educator and founder of Art Sanctuary, a community arts organization that showcases African American art, to the School Reform Commission.

"Lorene Cary is a nationally recognized writer, she has a tremendous education background, but for me what is truly outstanding is that she has an incredible passion for the well-being of children; she cares very personally about parents and she's very much focused on supporting teachers. She will be a tremendous asset to the School Reform Commission and the children of Philadelphia," said Mayor Nutter.

Ms. Cary's novel, "The Price of a Child," was the inaugural One Book One Philadelphia selection in 2003. A senior lecturer in creative writing in the English Department of the University of Pennsylvania, Cary founded Art Sanctuary in 1998 as a means of using African American art to enrich the city and region, to bring the arts to schools and to build and strengthen a network among artists.

Ron Tomalis, Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, said, "I am pleased to welcome Lorene to the SRC, as I believe her experience will be beneficial to the school district and the Commission. I look forward to working with her and her colleagues in the coming months as we address many of the critical issues facing the district."

A 2002 winner of the prestigious Philadelphia Award, Cary said, "I am honored to serve Philadelphia's students, teachers, and school leaders, and through them, our entire city. My parents were both Philadelphia public school teachers; I attended elementary school here; our

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children have spent about half their school life in District schools; and as a writer and arts organization director, I've worked with schools and with kids, parents, and grandparents who know that a good education is their only real hope for success. I am grateful to be called to serve them on this committed and talented team."

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Ms. Cary has undergraduate and graduate degrees from Penn. She also won a Thouron Fellowship and earned an MA in Victorian Literature from Sussex University in the United Kingdom.

She graduated from St. Paul's School in Concord, N.H. and later taught at the school. Her first book, "Black Ice," is a powerful coming of age memoir about her time as a student at St. Paul's and as a teacher and trustee at the school.

For more than a decade, the Art Sanctuary has been a labor of love for Ms. Cary. Originally based in North Philadelphia at the Church of the Advocate, where Ms. Cary also taught Sunday School, Art Sanctuary has relocated its staff offices, gallery and classroom to a renovated building at 16th and Bainbridge streets.

Ms. Cary lives in East Falls with her husband, the Rev. Robert C. Smith, rector of the Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd. The couple has two daughters.

The School Reform Commission is the five-member governing body of the School District of Philadelphia. The commission was established in 2001 when control of the district was assumed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Governor of Pennsylvania appoints three of the members, and the Mayor of Philadelphia appoints two members to the commission.

"Lorene brings a spirit of openness and energy to everything she does, and her skill sets and commitments will nicely complement those of the sitting members," said Dr. Lori Shorr, Mayor Nutter's Chief Education Officer and a newly installed Executive Advisor to the SRC and School District. "She knows first-hand how tough this work is on the ground, and it's a testament to her passion for educational opportunity that she is willing to take on an assignment that is so central to the city's well-being."

Ms. Cary will join the Mayor's other recent appointee, Dr. Wendell E. Pritchett, Chancellor of Rutgers University-Camden, on the SRC. The new members will join two current gubernatorial appointees – Denise McGregor Armbrister and Joseph A. Dworetzky. Gov. Corbett has nominated Pedro Ramos to serve on the SRC and he's awaiting confirmation by the Pennsylvania Senate.

Source: *Office of the Mayor*

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