

Media Contact:

Malina Jeffers, mjeffers@walkertheatre.com, 317.236.2099 (office), 317.416.7741 (mobile)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Walker Theatre Addresses the Elephant in the Room

INDIANAPOLIS--- In an article written by Shannon Williams published by the Indianapolis Recorder, the Walker Theatre's air conditioning system was called out as the elephant in the room. The article addressed the lack of unity and support from the African-American community towards the 85 year old legacy that is the Madame Walker Theatre Center.

On Friday, May 4th, staff and board of the Madame Walker Theatre Center will be on site at New Orleans on the Avenue with Amos Brown from Afternoons with Amos. From 1-3p, anyone who purchases a meal from New Orleans, 10% of the proceeds will go to the Walker. Amos Brown will discuss Walker building concerns with the community and with the board of directors.

The board estimates \$1 Million as the needed amount for critical facility maintenance in order to keep the building safe and open for the remainder of 2012. This includes a \$600,000 HVAC system that would provide air and heat for the building, \$20,000 for new roof repairs and plumbing, \$3,000 to fix the sewage and odor that lurks in the theatre, \$20,000 for updated electrical wiring that will provide for new lighting and a sound system as well as \$165,000 for additional general building maintenance.

The 2011-2012 board of directors at the Madame Walker Theatre Center consists of Joni Collins as Chair, Sharnell Johnson as Treasurer, Shannon Williams as Secretary as well as Crystal Babb, A'Lelia Bundles, Yvonne Harrington, Jan Michelson, Doran Moreland, Jackie Morson, Pat Payne and Dr. Sherree A. Wilson.

Current major funding sources for the Walker include Lilly Endowment, Central Indiana Community Foundation, the Arts Council of Indianapolis and the Indiana Arts Commission. The Madame Walker Theatre Center has an annual budget of 1.4 million dollars.

In addition to corporate contributions and grants, the Walker is desperately seeking support from the Indianapolis community. The historic landmark is hoping that Indy residents will begin to take ownership of the venue and to continue to find the importance of saving its legacy.

The Madame Walker Theatre Center, an internationally recognized National Historic Landmark, preserves and builds upon the entrepreneurial and philanthropic legacy of its namesake by celebrating the best of African American culture and performance arts, by nurturing youth through arts education and by providing a welcoming venue for arts programming and entrepreneurial activities for all cultures in our community and nation.

###