



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Westport Museum's new exhibit in collaboration with Westport Country Playhouse explores The Great Migration

Departures/Arrivals exhibit to open in the Lucille Lortel White Barn Center at Westport Country Playhouse in conjunction with mainstage production of *From the Mississippi Delta* by Endesha Ida Mae Holland

For More Info Contact:

Sara Krasne, Westport Museum for History & Culture at marketing@westporthistory.org, 203-222-1424

Westport, CT, October 7, 2022--This October, Westport Museum and Westport Country Playhouse are collaborating on an exhibition that explores an important milestone in African American history: The Great Migration. The exhibit, entitled *Departures/Arrivals* ties in with the Playhouse's current production, *From the Mississippi Delta*, the gripping tale of a woman's triumphant rise from poverty in the Deep South.

Considered among the largest movements of people in human history, The Great Migration took place between 1910 and 1970 when African Americans from the South moved to the Northern, Mid-Western and Western states, seeking liberty, personal security, and opportunity.

October 7, 2022

Westport Museum/Westport Country Playhouse Joint Exhibit

Page 2 of 4

Like European immigrants from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Black Southerners who fled their southern homes often left with little more than the clothes on their backs. Their reasons for leaving were myriad: They sought better economic and educational opportunity and freedom from the terror of violence. Nearly 5,000 Black Americans were lynched in the period coinciding with The Great Migration.

Departures/Arrivals will be installed in the Playhouse's Lucille Lortel White Barn Center in time for the opening of the play *From the Mississippi Delta* and will explore The Great Migration—and the lives of migrants after relocating North to towns like Westport.

The play *From the Mississippi Delta* is the inspiring, autobiographical story of Dr. Endesha Ida Mae Holland whose journey takes her from poverty and prostitution in the Jim Crow South to civil rights activism, academic achievement, and success as a Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright. The Playhouse show is directed by Goldie E. Patrick.

“Moving north provided opportunity and safety but African Americans who now called New England towns home still faced prejudice and injustice,” said Ramin Ganeshram, Westport Museum's Executive Director. “Despite the challenges these intrepid souls persisted and thrived. The exhibit tells their stories.”

The show is an opportunity for two of Westport's great cultural institutions to combine their strengths and explore history in a new and engaging way. The Museum will also collaborate with Director Goldie Patrick who is noted for her zealous approach to developing new theatre focused on cultivating a vast culturally inclusive lens in her work.

“Westport Country Playhouse and the Westport Museum for History and Culture are anchor institutions in the town of Westport and the region,” said Westport Country Playhouse's

October 7, 2022

Westport Museum/Westport Country Playhouse Joint Exhibit

Page 3 of 4

Managing Director Michael Barker. “So it is natural for us to connect the dots between of our collective history as Americans, Westport’s relationship to Black people, and the Playhouse’s production of *From the Mississippi Delta*. I am thrilled that we can collaborate in this way with the Westport Museum, with the generous support of CT Humanities, to educate and inspire our community.”

Departures/Arrivals will open on October 19th and run until November 30, 2022. The exhibit is free of charge and open to visitors between 9am-5pm, Monday through Friday, and for two hours before performances of *From the Mississippi Delta*. To schedule private tours, contact Westport Museum’s Director of Programming, Nicole Carpenter at programs@westporthistory.org. Fee for curator-led private tours is \$25 per person.

—30—

ABOUT WESTPORT MUSEUM FOR HISTORY & CULTURE: The award-winning Westport Museum for History & Culture’s mission is to continually engage in scholarly research and examination of Westport’s history as part of the larger American story. We encourage interest in recognizing and preserving the records, relics and historic sites of the Town of Westport and vicinity. We take a holistic view of local and national history that is inclusive of the histories of all people and groups represented in American heritage.

ABOUT Westport Country Playhouse

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced theater of the highest caliber and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The not-for-profit Playhouse provides this experience in

October 7, 2022

Westport Museum/Westport Country Playhouse Joint Exhibit

Page 4 of 4

multiple ways by offering live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos; educational and community engagement events to further explore the work on stage; the New Works Initiative, a program dedicated to the discovery, development, and production of new live theatrical works; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; Script in Hand play readings to deepen relationships with audiences and artists; the renowned Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. Charity Navigator has recently awarded its top 4-star charity rating to the Playhouse in recognition of its strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.