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**THE KRESGE FOUNDATION AND THE COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES
PRESENT THE INAUGURAL \$50,000 KRESGE EMINENT ARTIST AWARD
TO DETROIT ARTIST CHARLES MCGEE**

Detroit, Michigan - December 8, 2008

Detroit artist, Charles McGee, has been named the inaugural 2008 Kresge Eminent Artist by Kresge Arts in Detroit, a new initiative from The Kresge Foundation administered by the College for Creative Studies (CCS). The \$50,000 award recognizes the longstanding and renowned contribution that McGee has made to the visual arts and to the Metropolitan Detroit arts community throughout his career.

Over the past six decades, McGee, 84, has had a distinguished career that includes hundreds of exhibitions in the United States and abroad as well as many important contributions to Detroit's cultural and educational community. His paintings, assemblages and sculptures are in prestigious national and international collections, and are permanently installed at local institutions including the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. McGee is a mentor, teacher, and community arts advocate, founding the Charles McGee School of Art, Gallery 7, and the Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit (CAID).

Kresge Arts in Detroit, funded by The Kresge Foundation, will annually provide significant financial support for one Kresge Eminent Artist Award to an outstanding artist in the Visual, Performing and Literary Arts whose influential body of work, impact on their art form, and proven commitment to the Detroit cultural community are evident.

"Charles McGee exemplifies what it means to be eminent and what it means to be a Detroiter," says Rip Rapson, president of the Kresge Foundation. "He is an artist of international renown who in his life and his work is energetic, passionate, always probing and eager to reinvent. It is fitting that he be named the first Kresge Eminent Artist."

Nominations for the award are made by the Kresge Arts in Detroit Advisory Council, a 19-member volunteer group of leaders in the Metropolitan Detroit cultural community who provide external oversight to Kresge Arts in Detroit.

The award recipient is selected by an independent review panel comprised of well-respected and knowledgeable artists and arts professionals in the local cultural community. The 2008 review panel included Gerhardt Knodel, artist and former director of Cranbrook Academy of Art, Dennis Alan Nawrocki, art historian and author of the recently published third edition of *Art in Detroit Public Places* (Wayne State University Press), and Dr. Cledie Taylor, founder and director of Arts Extended Gallery.

“The Kresge Foundation, through Kresge Arts in Detroit, acknowledges the individual artist as a potent force in bringing about the change Detroit needs and deserves. We are proud to administer the Kresge Eminent Artist Award and believe that engaging the creative community is key to revitalizing the region,” said Richard L. Rogers, president of CCS and co-chair of the Kresge Arts in Detroit Advisory Council. “Charles McGee serves as an example to all aspiring artists with his exceptional work and ongoing commitment to our community. We are honored to announce him as the inaugural recipient of the Kresge Eminent Artist Award.”

The Kresge Eminent Artist Award is unrestricted and given each year to one artist who has lived and worked in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb Counties for a significant number of years, has a distinguished record of professional achievement in the arts, has made a significant impact on their chosen art form, shares their talent and expertise with the broader arts community and community at large and has contributed generously to the growth and vibrancy of Detroit’s cultural environment.

To commemorate Charles McGee’s work and share it with the community, The Kresge Foundation has published a monograph that will be distributed to arts organizations and institutions, and libraries in the region, including the Library of Michigan.

The Kresge Foundation: The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.5 billion private, national foundation, based in Troy, Michigan, that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations through its support of nonprofit organizations in six fields: health, the environment, arts and culture, education, human services and community development. Kresge Arts in Detroit, which comprises the Kresge Eminent Artist Award, Kresge Artist Fellowships and Kresge Arts Support, represents one of five strategic objectives set forth in the foundation’s Detroit Program, a comprehensive community-development effort to strengthen the long-term economic, social and cultural fabric of the city and surrounding region. For further information, visit www.kresge.org.

College for Creative Studies: The Kresge Eminent Artist Award is administered by the Kresge Arts in Detroit office at the College for Creative Studies. Located in midtown Detroit’s Cultural Center, the College for Creative Studies is a world leader in art and design education and prepares students to enter the new, global economy where creativity shapes better communities and societies. A private, fully accredited college, CCS enrolls over 1,300 students pursuing Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees. Beginning in fall 2009 the College will also offer Master of Fine Arts degrees in Design and in Transportation Design. For further information, visit www.collegeforcreativestudies.edu.

For more information about the Kresge Eminent Artist Award and the 2008 Kresge Eminent Artist, please visit www.kresgeartsindetroit.org.

For images of Charles McGee’s work, please contact Beth Marmarelli at bmarmarelli@collegeforcreativestudies.edu, 313.664.7667 phone.