



JACQUIE JONES STEPS DOWN AT NBPC

**National Black Programming Consortium executive director resigns;
Leslie Fields-Cruz is appointed interim executive director of the media arts nonprofit**

NEW YORK (May 1, 2014)—Jacquie Jones, who has served as executive director of National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) since 2005, has stepped down. The board of directors of the 35-year-old nonprofit, which develops, produces and funds media content about the black experience for public media outlets, including television, digital radio and online, accepted her resignation this week.

During her tenure, Jones directed the expansion of NBPC from a focus primarily on public television, where the organization continues to bring black voices to the medium, to navigating the new world of digital media. Among the initiatives she founded is the pioneering New Media Institute, which has trained more than 500 media professionals in cutting-edge digital and web tools and the online public interest media portal, www.blackpublicmedia.org. Under her leadership, the organization created an online, digital media project—one of the first for public media—documenting the hurricanes that devastated New Orleans and the entire gulf region in 2005 and later went on to establish the Public Media Corps, a national service designed to connect minority and low-income communities with both broadband-enabled public media resources and social media tools. Projects and programs focusing on issues affecting black people including education, politics and identity have helped bring recognition, awards and millions of new people to the organization’s work in her years as executive director.

“Walking away from the day-to-day management of an organization that has personified for me the very best in black media has been a difficult, bittersweet decision,” said Jones. “It has truly been my honor to have led NBPC during the last exhilarating, tumultuous, revolutionary nine years as we’ve watched the media landscape be taken apart wholesale and recreated in ways simply not imaginable a decade ago.”

Jones, who won Peabody and Gracie awards for the 2013 NBPC documentary series, “180 Days: A Year Inside An American High School,” will return to film production starting with the follow up “180 Days: Hartsville,” a co-production of NBPC and South Carolina ETV. Her previous television credits include “Africans in America”—for which she also won a Peabody Award—and “Matters of Race” for PBS, “From Behind Closed Doors: Sex in the 20th Century” for Showtime and “The World Before Us” for the History Channel.

“Jacquie's leadership at NBPC brought creativity and innovation to the mission of bringing quality stories and storytellers of the Black experience to public media. She's set a great foundation for our future,” said Eric Easter, chairman of NBPC.

“Jacquie has been a significant contributor to public broadcasting over many years and we are so pleased to know that even as she leaves the helm of NBPC she will remain in the public media family. Her deep commitment to the proposition that our work will reflect all American voices has brought a series of ground-breaking initiatives to public media,” said Pat Harrison, CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. “I’m looking ahead to many years of working with one of our system’s most visionary leaders in the critical area of innovation, diversity and award-winning projects.”

“Public media’s mission is to reflect and serve the American people. Jacquie has been a driving force in helping us fulfill this mission by championing programs that reflect the true diversity of our country, and looking for ways to extend their impact beyond our airwaves and into communities,” stated PBS President & CEO Paula Kerger. “While I’m sad to see her step down as the executive director of NBPC, I am confident that she will continue to make a significant impact on the future of public media in her role as an award-winning producer.”

“Jacquie is a visionary in a world where vision is so desperately needed, pointing the way for all of us in public media as a champion of diverse voices, multi-platform storytelling, and engagement that makes every story count,” said Sally Fifer, president & CEO of the Independent Television Service (ITVS). “Her leadership at NBPC has been a boon for public broadcasting and a community of media makers strengthened by her passion, ideas and fierce support.”

Jones was preceded by Mable Haddock, the founding executive director of NBPC, who served from 1980 until 2005.

Leslie Fields-Cruz, the organization’s vice president and director of programming, will step in as NBPC’s interim executive director. In addition to her duties overseeing the operations of the New York office, managing NBPC’s budget and supervising staff, she has served as co-executive producer of the innovative NBPC public television series “AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange,” now in its sixth season. She has supervised the distribution of its programs to PBS since 2001. Prior to joining NBPC, Fields-Cruz served as a Program Coordinator at the Creative Capital Foundation and was the Membership Director at the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF). From 2004 to 2013, she served on the board of Women Make Movies.

“With more than 13 years of experience as a leader at NBPC, we could not ask for a more dedicated, thoughtful person than Leslie to manage this transition,” said Jones.

“Jacquie Jones has been an invaluable advocate, advisor and funder, without whom our job as independent producers of color would have been so much harder,” said award-winning indie filmmaker Thomas Allen Harris, whose latest film “Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People” was partially funded by NBPC. “Over the years, we have received tremendous support for our projects and Leslie Fields Cruz has been there every step of the way. We look forward to the continued elevation of black public media under her leadership.”

To find out more about NBPC, visit www.blackpublicmedia.org.

About the National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC)

The [National Black Programming Consortium](http://www.blackpublicmedia.org) develops, produces and funds content about the Black experience for public media outlets, including PBS and PBS.org, BlackPublicMedia.org and other public media outlets. Founded in 1979, NBPC produces *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* documentary series and manages the community engagement project Public Media Corps (PMC).

###

For interviews or press inquiry, contact:

Cheryl L. Duncan
Cheryl Duncan & Company Inc.
cheryl@cherylduncanpr.com
201-552-9239

