

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **LIFELINE THEATRE CAPS 40TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH POWERFUL RETELLING OF *FROM THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA*, A CO-PRODUCTION WITH PEGASUS THEATRE CHICAGO**

Performances with Open Captioning on May 20 and June 9  
Performance with Touch Tour and Audio Description on May 28

CHICAGO – Lifeline Theatre presents ***From the Mississippi Delta***, based on the autobiography of and written by **Dr. Endesha Ida Mae Holland**. Lifeline Theatre's Artistic Director **ILesa Duncan** directs ***From the Mississippi Delta*** and the production runs Thursday, April 27— Sunday, June 18 at Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. (free parking and shuttle; see below.) The press opening for ***From the Mississippi Delta*** is Sunday, Apr. 30 at 2:30 p.m. Opening night is Monday, May 1 at 7:30 p.m. (Previews are Thursday, Apr. 27 at 7:30 p.m.; Friday, Apr. 28 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday Apr. 29 at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, May 30 at 2:30 p.m.). Regular performance times (May 5 – June 18) are Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2:30 and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. Ticket prices are \$45 for regular single tickets, \$25 for previews, \$35 for seniors and active/retired military personnel (with ID), \$15 for students (with ID), with group rates for 10 or more available upon request. Tickets may be purchased visiting [www.lifelinetheatre.com](http://www.lifelinetheatre.com) or at the Lifeline Theatre Box Office, 773.761.4477. The production runs approximately 2 hours with an intermission. The autobiography will be on sale in the lobby.

***From the Mississippi Delta*** is based on Dr. Holland's memoir of the same title as she recounts her 20-year journey from humble beginnings in Greenwood, Mississippi to achieving her Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. Directed by Lifeline Artistic Director **ILesa Duncan** (*Neverwhere* [2018], *Middle Passage*), experience a story of triumph in the face of extreme adversity that expertly weaves through the trials and tribulations of Dr. Holland's life relayed through the bodies and voices of only three actors, all in tribute to one of America's unsung "sheroes".

Co-producer **Pegasus Theatre Chicago** is developing a series of city-wide community engagement events and post-performance talk-backs. Events include: #ProtectBlackGirls: A Panel Discussion on Organizing, Advocacy, and Action; "Dirt to Delta," a poetry performance; and a writing workshop. Dates and locations will be updated on the Lifeline and Pegasus websites.

The complete cast and production team for ***From the Mississippi Delta*** includes guest artists **LaKecia Harris, Arielle Leverett, & Jenise Sheppard**; with understudies **Tierra Matthews**.

**PRODUCTION TEAM:** Lifeline ensemble member **ILesa Duncan** (Director); with guest artists **Deon Custard** (Sound Designer), **Adi Davis** (Production Manager), **Gregory Geffrard** (Intimacy Consultant), **Gregory Graham** (Costume Designer), **Tanji Harper** (Choreographer/Movement Designer), **Ricky Harris** (Music Director), **Wendy Ann Huber** (Props Designer), **Roxie Kooi** (Stage Manager), **Angela Weber Miller** (Scenic Designer), **Harrison Ornelas** (Technical Director), **Shadana Patterson** (Dialect Coach), **Jocelyn Prince** (Dramaturg), **Karen Wallace** (Lighting Supervisor), and **Levi Wilkins** (Lighting Designer).

### **ABOUT DR. ENDESHA IDA MAE HOLLAND**

Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. Chicago, IL 60626  
773-761-4477, [www.lifelinetheatre.com](http://www.lifelinetheatre.com)

**Dr. Endesha Ida Mae Holland** (1944-2006) was a writer and an emeritus professor of theater at the University of Southern California. She was best-known for her play, ***From the Mississippi Delta***, which was based on her memoir of the same name. Delta chronicled her journey from Jim Crow-era poverty, rape and prostitution to civil rights activism. Holland became involved with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and participated in numerous civil rights protests. She left Mississippi in 1965 as a dropout to further her education.. Although it took 20 years, she earned her bachelor's, master's degree and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota

#### **ABOUT ILESA DUNCAN, Director and Artistic Director of Lifeline Theatre**

ILesa Duncan became Lifeline's artistic director and joined the ensemble in January 2019, where she directed *Neverwhere* (Jeff Recommended 2018), and *Blue Shadow* (2010 KidSeries Premiere). A producer, director, writer, educator and theater-maker, Duncan is an avid collaborator on new work. Other directing credits include *Eclipsed* (Jeff Recommended), *Shakin' The Mess Outta Misery* (Jeff Nominated), *Rutherford's Travels* (Jeff Nominated, co-adapter), *The Green Book*, *For Her as a Piano*, and *Blacula: Young, Black & Undead* at Pegasus Theatre (where is the Producing Artistic Director); *Broken Fences* at 16th Street Theater; *The Nativity* (Congo Square; Jeff nominated); and the Jeff Award-winning *Jar the Floor* at ETA Creative Arts. Duncan has also worked with The Goodman, Writers Theatre, Victory Gardens, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Stage Left, and Chicago Dramatists, as well as Contemporary American Theatre Company (Ohio), The Alliance Theatre (Atlanta), Arena Stage (Washington DC), and Lincoln Center Theater (New York). As an educator, Duncan has led youth development and arts education programs in Chicago for more than 13 years. She is a past awardee of an NEA/TCG Directing fellowship and a 3 Arts Ragdale's Fellowship. She is member of the Lincoln Center Theatre Director's Lab and the Chicago Director's Lab, and is an associate artist with Chicago Dramatists (where she previously served as education and community engagement director).

**Accessible Performances:** The Saturday, May 20, 2:30 p.m. performance and the Friday, June 9, 7:30 p.m. performances will feature open captioning for patrons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The Sunday, May 28, 2:30 p.m. performance will feature a pre-show touch tour of the set at 1 p.m. and live audio description for patrons who are blind or have low vision. For more information about Lifeline's accessibility services, please contact our Accessibility Coordinator at 773.761.4477 x703 or at [access@lifelinetheatre.com](mailto:access@lifelinetheatre.com).

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Celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> season, Lifeline Theatre continues to explore, interpret, and reimagine books and other literary works to create stories that move us beyond the margins of our own lives. Lifeline Theatre – Big Stories, Up Close.

Lifeline Theatre's MainStage programs are partially supported by Carol Oppenheim + Jerome Lamet Charitable Fund; a CityArts Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events; Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; FGMK LLC; Flex Print, Inc.; Illinois Arts Council Agency; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; Rogers Park Social; S&C Electric Company Fund; The Shubert Foundation; and the annual support of businesses and individuals.

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