

For Immediate Release

Contact: Laura Kirby at 828-350-0833 or [lkirby@wncap.org](mailto:lkirby@wncap.org)

## Glenis Redmond to be Honorary Chair of WNCAP's Raise Your Hand Auction

Asheville, July 30, 2008 – Glenis Redmond, the service-oriented poet who lends her time and experience to numerous causes, has been named honorary chair of Raise Your Hand, the annual, major fundraising auction for the Western North Carolina AIDS Project (WNCAP).

The auction will be held Saturday evening, November 15, in the Grand Ballroom of the Grove Park Inn. The evening's festivities will include a silent auction beginning at 6 p.m., dinner at 8 p.m., and a live auction with professional auctioneer to follow dinner.

Raise Your Hand annually draws close to 400 people and raises more than \$85,000 to provide a major source of funding for WNCAP's work in Western North Carolina.

This year's honorary chair, Glenis Redmond, speaks and performs for audiences across the United States. She says she especially relishes working with groups in Asheville and Western North Carolina. Locally, she has worked with Our Voice, the YWCA, Project STEAM, Girl Scouts, Helpmate and many other nonprofits.

Redmond is a 2005-2006 North Carolina Literary Award recipient and a Denny C. Plattner Award winner for outstanding poetry. She has been published in *Meridians*, *African Voices*, *EMRYS*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, *2006 Kakalak: A Journal of Carolina Poets*, *Appalachian Heritage* and the *Appalachian Journal*. Redmond's most recent book, *Under the Sun*, was published by Main Street Rag in Charlotte.

Redmond said, "WNCAP called and asked me to be their honorary chairperson for Raise Your Hand this year, and I could not say 'no.' As a past counselor, I have witnessed countless stories of how HIV/AIDS alters lives. In the face of the largeness, I am both honored and humbled to serve in this small way. When HIV/AIDS entered our field of vision in the 1980s, we had to reconfigure as a nation, as a community, and as individuals. We had to figure out different ways of being in the world.

"In 2008, we are still figuring it out, how to live and how to love. Yet, our grief is still palpable as we grapple with those we have lost. We watched the celebrities who perished on the forefront: Arthur Ashe, Ryan White, Rock Hudson, Tim Richmond, Perry Ellis....and the list goes on," she said.

Redmond added, “But in our home and neighborhoods there have been countless others: friends and family members. What this disease has taught us is that it could be any one of us.”

“I accept this role with a startling sobriety because I know my face represents one of the fastest growing demographics infected by HIV/AIDS, black women. According to the Centers for Disease Control, black women accounted for 67 percent of all new AIDS cases among women. Black youth demonstrate the largest single group of young people affected by HIV,” she said.

“If we believe we have no future, we act and live as if there are no consequences. We must not avert our eyes,” Redmond said. “We must not shake our heads in denial or trust our lovers blindly. Our bodies matter. We matter. No matter our color, religion, sexual orientation or gender, we must rise, raise the awareness level so those living with the disease are afforded the treatment, dignity and love they deserve and we must keep on working until everyone understands that this disease is preventable and need not be transmitted,” Redmond said.

She concluded, “We must educate, inform and empower. As a poet, I encourage all to raise their voice for a healthier and more compassionate way of being in this world. As we rise, the world rises with us. As a city, county, state and world we can do better as we open our eyes and extend our hands in service as we offer hope. We are our greatest resource. I urge you to give to WNCAP through time, talent and funds.”

Additional information about the Western North Carolina AIDS project and its Raise Your Hand auction is available as the organization’s web site, [www.wncap.org](http://www.wncap.org) or by calling 252.7489.

###