

# Paul Green Foundation

NEWS – October 2017



## Native Son's New Adaptation



Playwright **Nambi Kelley** has written plays for Steppenwolf, Goodman Theatre and Lincoln Center and most recently was named playwright-in-residence at the National Black Theatre in

New York. Kelley's adaptation of *Native Son* was presented to critical acclaim for the premiere production at the Court Theatre/American Blues Festival. Since that first production it has been produced in New York, California, Georgia and Arizona, and published by Samuel French in 2016.

The Green Foundation joined with the Wright Estate to sanction these productions.

**A bit of history:** Paul Green and Richard Wright's *Native Son* that opened on March 24, 1941, at the St. James Theatre in New York City, was produced by Orson Welles and John Houseman. Of the very serious disagreement that ensued between Green and Wright, Dr. Laurence Avery, Professor Emeritus, UNC-Chapel Hill writes: "The essential difference between Green and Wright was that Green thought communist ideology was a sham while Wright, when he wrote the novel, was an adherent of that ideology (later he became disillusioned with it). In the dramatization, therefore, Green wanted to make Bigger finally realize that individuals must take responsibility for themselves, whereas Wright, under the urging of Houseman and Welles, wanted to show Bigger simply as a victim of racism in America. The differences between Green and Wright came into sharpest focus in the last scene of the play, in which Welles, in the production, had Bigger displayed on stage as being crucified on a cross, whereas Green wrote the scene with Bigger snatching a gun from a guard, then giving it back of his own volition going off to his execution."

A recent play, "Native" by Ian Finley and produced by EbzB Productions, explores this heated conversation between Wright and Green that cost them their friendship.

**PAUL GREEN ANNUAL MEETING**  
**NOVEMBER 4, 2017**  
**NC BOTANICAL GARDEN**  
**CHAPEL HILL, NC**

## The 2017 National Theatre Conference December 1-3 in New York City

Each year the **National Theatre Conference** Person of the Year names the **Paul Green Award** winner. This year's Person of the Year – **Molly Smith** selected **June Schreiner**, a highly acclaimed young actor. Since 1989, the Paul Green Foundation has honored a "young theatre professional" with this Paul Green Award.

Founded in 1925, the National Theatre Conference is a not-for-profit organization made up of distinguished members of the American Theatre Community; Green was instrumental in the founding the organization and served as president in the early years.



**June Schreiner**, an actress in Los Angeles, is the 31<sup>st</sup> recipient of this prestigious award. Ms. Schreiner is active in film, theatre and television. Like so many others, she began her acting career on stage performing for years at the local community theatre –

the Reston Community players. Her first professional opportunity was to play Ado Annie in DC's Arena Stage at age of 16 and later, also at Arena Stage, she portrayed Muriel McComber in Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness*. Ms. Schreiner most recently guest starred on *Pure Genius* (*Fire and Ice*, CBS); *NICS* (*Pay to Play*, CBS) and *Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders*.

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