

March 2, 2004

Mr. David Dunfield, Mayor
City Offices
6 East 6th Street
Lawrence, KS 66047-0708

Dear Mayor Dunfield,

Since November 16, 2003, at the City Commission's request, members of the committee proposing the use of the Carnegie Building as the Langston Hughes Center for Community Enrichment have met frequently with members of the committee proposing its use as the Arts Commons in order to determine whether the Hughes Center could both collaborate with and integrate the Arts Commons into its proposal. Members of the two groups discussed the possibilities intensely and thoughtfully, with City Manager Mike Wildgen meeting with us on several occasions. Members of the core committee of the Hughes Center committee, which met on February 26, however, reached a consensus that although we strongly believe, given a shared commitment to visual literacy, the Hughes Center will be able to collaborate with the Arts Commons in various ways—through joint programming and exhibitions, for example, it will not be possible to integrate the Arts Commons with the Hughes Center.

Our decision was based on several factors, most of which concern the accessibility of the Hughes Center to all of Lawrence's citizens and the limited space in the Carnegie Building. These factors include the following:

- * In addition to space needed for offices, diverse classrooms, a performance area, a gallery, and a commons area, the Hughes Center recognizes that elevators and special restrooms for use by people with disabilities and the elderly must be constructed. The Arts Commons' need for artists' studio space would thus, of necessity, have to be severely curtailed.

- * Given the Hughes Center's commitment to working with people of all ages, including children, the common area(s) in the building must be available to young people as well as adults. The Arts Commons representatives expressed a preference for an adult-oriented environment.

- * The use of potentially hazardous materials in the open studios of the Arts Commons might be injurious to young people and some health-impaired individuals.

- * The Hughes Center has already committed to sharing space with the National Heritage office. To share space with a third organization would limit the development of all of these organizations.

We write now to ask for the City Commission's approval to endorse our proposal for the former Carnegie Building to be reconceived and refurbished to become the Langston Hughes Center for Community Enrichment, anticipating that the Commission will then go forward to hire a person with planning and architectural expertise who will help implement the goals and

needs of the Hughes Center. We very much look forward to hearing from you in the near future, so that we may begin working together to address the issues of funding and programming for the Langston Hughes Center for Community Enrichment in order to make it an important resource for all Lawrence citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Elizabeth Schultz". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Elizabeth Schultz, for the Langston Hughes Center for Community Enrichment