FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The 43rd Western Area Conference**  
“Reaching Higher Ground” in Denver, Colorado  
June 14 – 18, 2017

**Western Area Links Will Leave Indelible Mark through Community Service, Recognition of Transformational Programs and Empowerment for More Than 800 Members**

**DENVER, CO** – More than 800 members of The Western Area of The Links, Incorporated will converge on The Mile High City, June 14-18, 2017, for the 43rd Western Area Conference. The remarkable gathering – with laser focus on “Reaching Higher Ground: A Mind for Business and A Heart for Service,” is an opportunity for empowerment and inspiration for members as well as the Denver community. As is traditional in the Western Area, a conference highlight is the opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to service in the host community. Members this year will support the Denver (CO) Chapter’s ongoing outreach with local youth at the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Camp. Other key events include honoring extraordinary national and community leaders; exploring advocacy in the Black Lives Matter Movement in a Public Policy Forum; and an innovative virtual health pavilion sponsored by Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Western Area Links will go to Denver’s Historic Five Points Neighborhood for a morning of engagement, service and recognition on Wednesday, June 14, from 9 a.m. to Noon at the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library in support of an education initiative with 5th-graders from Hallett Fundamental Academy. Sponsored students will attend the Cleo Parker Robinson --more--
Dance Camp, which will culminate with a special presentation of a Western Area Conference commemorative plaque.

“We are honored to have this opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to friendship and service. We’re excited about using this time together to strengthen our bonds of sisterhood and also broaden our awareness, effectiveness, and impact in the communities we serve,” said Roxann Thomas Chargois, Western Area Director. “We look forward to a rewarding morning at the historic Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, which holds special meaning as home to the Denver Chapter’s Links Community Room and Exhibit.”

The 43rd Western Area Conference opening will feature Comedian Jay Lamont – “The Human IPOD.” Lamont is not just a comedian, but a multi-talented entertainer kicking off the conference on Wednesday, June 14, at 8 p.m. The headliner for the culminating formal banquet is jazz violinist Ken Ford, an “electric” artist whose “infectious energy has audiences up on their feet and into the aisles, taking the violin center stage.” Ford will perform on Saturday, June 17, at 7 p.m.

The Public Forum “Game Changers: Legislation and Public Policy Impact on the Black Lives Matter Movement” is Friday, June 16, at 2:15 p.m. It will include a discussion of the Western Area’s Black Lives Matter Resolution endorsed by chapters in all 10 states in the area. “Black lives deserve the same level of dignity, respect, humanity, and presumed innocence as afforded to every other citizen in this country,” said Chargois.

On Saturday, June 17, at noon during the Civic Luncheon, the Western Area will honor community and national advocates for their work in key service areas. The awardees will be honored for paving the way to Peace, Power, Respect, Dignity and Love. The Western Area Director’s Award will be presented to Ed Dwight, renowned sculptor of extraordinary works of celebratory African American art; The Philanthropic Award will be presented to Robert F. Smith, tech investor, CEO and entrepreneur; Grammy Award winning jazz vocalist Diane Reeves will be honored in the Arts; Dr. Warren Washington, recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace --more--
Prize, will be the National Trends and Services recipient; Karen McNeil-Miller, president and CEO of Colorado Health Foundation, Health and Human Services; and Marie Greenwood, the first African American teacher in Denver Public Schools, Services to Youth.

Throughout the conference, members will be able to take advantage of a unique virtual health pavilion sponsored by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The virtual health Pavilion will allow members to track and record, through an online medical application, personal medical milestones and preventive steps taken to address the five areas in which the African American community experience the largest medical disparities.

Conference sponsors are The Denver Foundation, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, AARP, Colgate, Key Bank, AT&T, Toyota, Celestial Seasonings, Macy’s, National Kidney Foundation, Satterberg Foundation, Nike and OPI.

ABOUT THE WESTERN AREA/Connecting the Chain of Friendship
In September 1950, three chapters of The Links, Incorporated were chartered in California (Los Angeles, Oakland Bay Area and San Francisco), connecting the national organization’s chain of friendship from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Subsequently, the Western Area grew to include the southern tip of Texas northward to Alaska and westward across the Pacific to Hawaii.

Drawing on the synergy generated by women who are committed to friendship and service, the Western Area now has more than 3,000 members in 59 chapters located in ten states — Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and Washington.

Western Area chapters are characterized by leadership, award-winning programs, and warm, interpersonal relationships between and among members, as well with other chapters. Service hours that members contribute in their Western Area communities have increased yearly -- currently topping 200,000.

Link Glenda F. Newell-Harris, M.D., 16th National President, hails from the Western Area’s Alameda Contra-Costa (CA) Chapter. The 7th Western Area Director, the late Link Marion Schultz Sutherland, Seattle (WA) Chapter, was chosen to serve the organization as the 10th National President.

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To arrange interviews or photographs please contact:

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#walinks43 (conference hashtag) | #walinks | #linksinc | Twitter: @WA_Links
Facebook: Western Area of The Links, Incorporated
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The Western Area, The Links, Incorporated
43rd Western Area Conference
At-A-Glance

WHAT: 43rd Western Area Conference
WHEN: June 14-18, 2017
WHERE: Hyatt Regency, Denver Convention Center

WHO: The Links, Incorporated is an organization of 14,000+ African-American women in 284 chapters located in 41 states, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Members dedicate more than 500,000 service hours annually to sustaining and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African-Americans and other persons of African ancestry. Through its philanthropic arm, The Links Foundation, Incorporated, members have contributed more than $25 million to innovative programs across the country since its inception in 1979. These programs address critical issues of regional, national and international significance and quality of life of those we serve. To learn more about The Links, Incorporated, visit the website at www.linksinc.org.

The Western Area now has more than 2,800 members in 59 chapters located in ten states — Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and Washington. Western Area chapters are characterized by leadership, award-winning programs, and warm, interpersonal relationships between and among members, as well with other chapters. Service hours that members contribute in their Western Area communities have increased yearly -- currently topping 187,000.

HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS: (Photo and Interview Opportunities)
Event Press Check-in:

Wednesday, June 14
9:00 a.m. – Noon
Community Service Project
Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library
Historic Five Points Neighborhood
Conference Community Service Project in support of the Denver Chapter’s youth and education initiative with 5th Graders from Hallett Fundamental Academy. Sponsored students will attend the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Children’s Camp where they will learn dances from different countries, participate in arts and crafts activities and movement classes. Hear from guest story teller and dance great, Cleo Parker Robinson, at this morning reception and learn about Denver’s rich African American legends from Link Terry Nelson, Senior Special Collection and Community Resource Manager.

8:00 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Opening Ceremony
Hyatt Regency, Denver Convention Center
Hosted by Western Area Director Roxann Thomas Chargois and featuring Comedian Jay Lamont – “The Human IPOD.” Lamont is not just a comedian, but a multi-talented entertainer.

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Friday, June 16
2:15-3:45 p.m.
*Public Policy Forum*
Hyatt Regency, Denver Convention Center
“Game Changers: Legislation and Public Policy Impact on the Black Lives Matter Movement” -- a discussion of the Western Area’s Black Lives Matter Resolution endorsed by chapters in all 10 states represented in the organization.

Saturday, June 17
Noon-2 p.m.
*Civic Luncheon*
Hyatt Regency, Denver Convention Center
The Western Area will honor community and national advocates for their work in key service areas. The Philanthropic Award will be presented to Robert F. Smith, tech investor, CEO and entrepreneur. Grammy Award winning jazz vocalist Diane Reeves will be honored in The Arts; Karen McNeil-Miller, president and CEO of Colorado Health Foundation, the Health and Human Services Award; and Marie Greenwood, the first African American teacher in Denver Public Schools will receive the Services to Youth Award.

Saturday, June 17
7 p.m.
*White Rose Banquet*
‘The Captain’s Ball’
Hyatt Regency, Denver Convention Center
The headliner for the culminating formal banquet is jazz violinist Ken Ford, an “electric” artist whose “infectious energy has audiences up on their feet and into the aisles, taking the violin center stage.”

June 14-18
Hyatt Regency, Denver Convention Center
Western Area Health and Human Services Facet Virtual Health Pavilion sponsored by Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

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