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**Nancy Wilson Brings Down the House at USCA**

**November 7, 2007—Palm Springs, CA**—Jazz legend, Nancy Wilson, the National Minority AIDS Council's (NMAC) newest Board Member and Honorary Spokesperson, helped kick off the **2007 United States Conference on AIDS (USCA)** this evening with a special event entitled, *An Evening with Nancy Wilson: Celebrating NMAC's 20 Years of Service*. Played to a packed house, the concert commemorated NMAC's two decades of HIV/AIDS work and paid tribute to those leaders and community and faith-based organizations addressing HIV/AIDS from every prevention, care and treatment angle.

"There is one group of folks that we want to thank," says NMAC Executive Director Paul Kawata. "And that is all the people who work on the frontlines of this epidemic everyday. They are the real heroes tonight."

Founded in 1987, NMAC's mission has been to develop leadership within communities of color to address challenges of HIV/AIDS. For twenty years, NMAC has responded to the needs of communities of color by developing programs enhancing the skills necessary to confront this health crisis, including a public policy education program; national and regional training conferences; treatment and research programs and trainings; numerous publications and a website. The agency also serves an association of AIDS service organizations, F/CBOs, hospitals, clinics, health departments and other groups assisting people and families living with and affected by the AIDS epidemic.

The evening began with a special slide show that recounted the history of the AIDS epidemic and NMAC's role in it. Current and past board members, staff, NMAC members and those who have succumbed to the disease also were honored. The history of NMAC also was recounted on five illuminated columns.

As NMAC Executive Director Paul Kawata took the stage for his opening remarks, he was surprised by a special presentation. The NMAC board presented Kawata with two leis flown in from Hawaii to honor his Japanese heritage. The board, staff and audience also honored Kawata with a traditional Japanese bow to commemorate his dedication to the NMAC mission for the past eighteen years and as a sign of respect for his leadership and self-sacrifice.

And then the show began. Opening with the Van Morrison classic *Moondance*, Wilson engaged the audience for over an hour with a mixture of music, humor and heartfelt words. In addition to entertaining and "lifting the pains," as she described it, Wilson's dedication to NMAC, raising awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS in communities of color and eradicating the disease was clear: "This has been on everybody's mind. It was a wake-up call," says Wilson. "And we are

answering it. We have been informed of the crisis and we are trying our best to see that this is stopped in its tracks.”

NMAC produced this event with private donations only; no conference funds or federal dollars were expended. NMAC is dedicated to responsible stewardship of its funding, both government and private. Visit [www.nmac.org](http://www.nmac.org) for a list of funders who made this event possible.

**About USCA’s Sponsor – NMAC**

*The National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), founded in 1987, develops leadership within communities of color to address challenges of HIV/AIDS through a variety of programs and services, including public policy education; national conferences; regional trainings; treatment and research programs; electronic and printed publications; and a website: [www.nmac.org](http://www.nmac.org). The agency also serves as an association of faith- and community-based organizations (CBOs) and AIDS service organizations nationwide that provide HIV/AIDS services in communities of color. NMAC's advocacy efforts are funded through private funders and donors only.*

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