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Atlanta Pride Selects Grand Marshals for Parade

Three-Day Festival Begins on July 4 with New Location at Atlanta Civic Center

ATLANTA, JUNE 23, 2008 – As tens of thousands of spectators cheer them on, two longtime Atlantans will lead the Atlanta Pride Festival's parade on July 6, ushering in the last day of a three-day celebration of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender persons that is traditionally one of the largest Pride events in the U.S.

Shonia Brown, a lesbian entrepreneur and writer, and Scott Turner Schofield, a transgender writer and performer, were recently selected by the Atlanta Pride Committee after nominations from the community to lead the parade, which steps off at 1 p.m.

"Our grand marshals make a difference in Atlanta's GLBT community," says Donna Narducci, executive director of the Atlanta Pride Committee. "Their work advances the cause of promoting unity, visibility and self-esteem among gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons."

Brown is co-creator of "Rock, Rhythm and Rhyme Artist Explosion," a showcase of emerging artists that takes place each year during Atlanta Pride. An entrepreneur, she founded an arts, entertainment and technology company designed to market and promote emerging artists. Brown will also soon be launching Lesbian411.info, an online resource.

Brown also wrote "A Deeper Love," her first novel, which was published in 2002. Her fiction has also appeared in the anthology "Ma-Ka Diasporic Juks: Contemporary Writing by Queers of African Descent." She is working on her second novel, "The Minister's Wife" and a bi-anthology, "I Love You to Death: Black Lesbian Diaries," which will premiere in late 2009.

In 2005, the Atlanta Pride Committee awarded Brown its Community Builder Award to recognize her community service. Recently, she received recognition from the National Black Justice Coalition through their annual Black LGBTQ History Month campaign.

Schofield, a writer, performer and educator on gender and sexuality, became the first openly transgender artist commissioned by the National Performance Network for his third solo show “Becoming a Man in 127 EASY Steps.” One of only two works to be triple-commissioned by NPN in 2007, this piece is the last installment of an autobiographical performance trilogy. His three solo shows have toured to nationwide acclaim since 2001.

Schofield’s activist art has received several honors and a “Fruity” for his Off-Broadway success as part of New York City’s Fresh Fruit Festival. His autobiographical monologues challenge fundamental gender assumptions with stories of searching, embarrassment, pride and the joy of finding yourself on your own terms. In 2004, he became the youngest recipient of a Tanne Foundation Award. He was honored with a 2007 Princess Grace Foundation Fellowship in Acting, which he serves as an Artistic Associate at 7 Stages in Atlanta.

“Two Truths and Lie,” Schofield’s first book, was published this year by HomoFactus Press. A memoir passing as three solo plays, the book brings readers inside Schofield’s young life on the Homecoming Court and Debutante Ball circuit. A signature facet of Schofield’s work, this drama invites readers to explore gender, sex, sexuality, and self in their own first person.

Calpernia Addams, a Nashville native and veteran turned Hollywood actress, was also named Honorary Grand Marshal.

The parade kicks off on July 6 at 1 p.m. at the intersection of 10th Street and Piedmont Avenue, a change in location from past years. The parade will travel west on 10th Street, turn south on Peachtree Street and then turn east on Ralph McGill Boulevard. The parade will end at the entrance site to the Atlanta Pride Festival on Ralph McGill at the Atlanta Civic Center.

For more information, go to atlantapride.org.

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The Atlanta Pride Festival, a three-day event organized by the non-profit Atlanta Pride Committee, promotes unity, visibility and self-esteem among lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender persons. The celebration opens July 4 at the Atlanta Civic Center and includes entertainment, a marketplace, charity poker tournament, slam poetry event, commitment ceremony, dyke march and parade. The theme of the event, “Your Vote. Your Rights. Your Future,” was selected to motivate LGBT Atlantans to let their voice be heard through their vote in this election year.

The festival is supported through donations and sponsorships. Sponsors include Coca-Cola, Bud Light, Smirnoff, Carma Productions, Gay Community Yellow Pages, Gay.com, Southern Voice, David Atlanta Magazine, Korbel California Champagne, Delta Air Lines, Virgin Vines, 1701 Media, Logo, Orbitz, Chima Brazilian Steakhouse, Validus A Destination Club, Sera, Washington Mutual, Crunch Fitness, MetroAtlanta Ambulance Service, eon at Lindbergh, Verizon Wireless, esurance Online Auto Insurance, The New York Times, Georgia-Pacific, Hyatt Regency on Peachtree Street, The Home Depot, InterContinental Hotels Group, FritoLay, 1690 WMLB, Atlanta Magazine, Atlanta Intown, Curve, Instinct, Dating on Demand and Project Q Atlanta.