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EMMY AWARD WINNING FILM WRITER LENA WAITHE TO SPEAK AT DILLARD

NEW ORLEANS – Lena Waithe, award-winning film writer, producer, and actor is set to speak at Brain Food, the Dillard University President’s Lecture Series today, Thursday, October 18, at 7 p.m. in Georges Auditorium in the Professional Schools Building (PSB) at Dillard University, 2601 Gentilly Blvd. The event is free and open to the public.

Waithe is known for writing and appearing in the critically acclaimed Netflix series, *Master of None* and producing the Sundance hit film turned series, *Dear White People*. In *Master Of None*, Waithe plays Denise who serves as Dev (Aziz Ansari’s) best friend. In the episode “Thanksgiving,” Denise reveals to her family that she doesn’t identify as a straight Black woman. Waithe earned recognition for the role because it depicted how queer people of color juggle cultural norms and expectations when coming out to their family members.

“Thanksgiving” became the most invaluable episode in the *Master of None* series. Entertainment critic Hank Stuever of *The Washington Post* claims the episode “compactly [presents] an array of emotional cues and natural reactions (along with its impeccable song playlists and pop-culture references), proving once again that a quick-sketch approach can sometimes produce a full portrait.” Waithe’s acting credits further extend to her appearing in Steven Spielberg’s *Ready Player One*, Amazon’s *Transparent* and HBO’s *The Comeback*.

Outside of acting, Waithe serves as the creator, writer and executive producer of Showtime’s coming-of-age series, *The Chi*. She also produced the Netflix film, *Step Sisters*, and Tiffany Johnson’s short film, *Ladylike*. Choosing to not rest on her laurels, Waithe is currently developing a new television series titled, *Twenties*. It is loosely based on how she navigated her first ten years living in Los Angeles as a twenty-something woman.

Beginning with the University’s first official president, William Stuart Nelson in the 1930s, public intellectual discourse has been a part of Dillard’s heritage. In the 1950s, Albert Dent organized the Edwin R. Embree Memorial Lecture Series whose guests included Eleanor Roosevelt, Thurgood Marshall, Mary McLeod Bethune, Martin Luther King Jr., and Jackie Robinson. Subsequently, Dillard presidents have assembled lectures that reflected their sensibilities. During Samuel DuBois Cook’s tenure, he established

a lyceum series and built a fine arts center to provide a new venue for lectures, theater and music. Walter M. Kimbrough launched Brain Food in 2013, and has continued the tradition with speakers such as Michael Eric Dyson, Misty Copeland, Benjamin Crump and Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin, the parents of Trayvon Martin.

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Dillard University, located in New Orleans at 2601 Gentilly Blvd., is a private four-year liberal arts historically black institution with a history dating back to 1869. For more information, please visit www.dillard.edu. Also, follow us on Twitter, Facebook @DU1869 and Instagram, Dillard University.