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PUBLIC CONVERSATIONALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 2009 SPIRIT & PLACE FESTIVAL

**John Fetterman, Bill Hudnut to explore
Spirit & Place Festival Theme: *Inspiring Places***

***Sunday, November 15, 3:30 p.m.—5:30 p.m.
St. Luke's United Methodist Church***

INDIANAPOLIS –John Fetterman, innovative mayor of Braddock, Pennsylvania, and Bill Hudnut, former four-term Republican mayor of Indianapolis, will lead the Public Conversation for the 14th annual Spirit & Place Festival on Sunday, November 15. This year, the Festival runs from Friday, November 6 through Sunday, November 15.

The mission of the Festival is to stimulate conversation, collaboration, community building and action based on the artistic, spiritual and civic traditions that make Central Indiana unique. The Festival, unveiling its new 10-day format, is a civic celebration that engages more than 20,000 through 40 programs presented by more than 100 organizations throughout Central Indiana. Nearly 85% of the events are free of charge. This year's theme for the city's largest collaborative festival is *Inspiring Places*.

“The theme has ignited the imagination of performers and public servants as well as artists and authors. To explore the notion of ‘place’ is to come to grips with the personality of geography—the texture and character of the events, environment, and people that transform space into place,” says Spirit & Place Director Pam Blevins Hinkle.

The Public Conversation, moderated by nationally known Indiana author Scott Russell Sanders, is considered the climax of the 10-day long Festival. The Public Conversation brings together powerful thinkers who would not otherwise meet for a spontaneous, dynamic and thought-provoking dialogue centered on this year's theme of *Inspiring Places*.

The Festival is honored to have two pacesetters lead the conversation: John Fetterman, the imposing-looking mayor of Braddock, Pennsylvania, who is transforming the town's “malignant beauty” through projects ranging from the development of urban farms and community orchards to the production of public art and reclamation of abandoned buildings; and Bill Hudnut, former four-term Republican mayor of Indianapolis from 1976-1991, who is renown for reviving Indianapolis through entrepreneurial public-private partnerships and the development of a “sports capital” strategy, which lured the Indianapolis Colts, the National Sports Festival, and the Pan Am games to the city, among others.

“Spearheading community development in very different cities and in very different times, these two entrepreneurial gentlemen have much to teach us about how we create and re-create inspiring places,” notes Blevins Hinkle.

The new format of the 2009 Public Conversation will also include an opportunity for audience members to ask questions, and a “place-based” performance will conclude the program. Multiple university, congregational, and community choirs, as well as the Indianapolis Brass Choir, will join forces in a sonic

exploration of space. Highlighting polychoral repertoire in various styles, this “surround sound” experience will feature spatially separate choirs as well as images of the sacred places which inspired the compositions.

The Public Conversation is free of charge; no tickets will be required for the November 15 event. The 2009 Public Conversation is sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company with support from Hilton Indianapolis, Indiana Humanities Council, St. Luke's United Methodist Church, and WFYI.

John Fetterman is the 39 year old mayor of Braddock, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh and the site of Andrew Carnegie's first steel mill. The town, hit hard by the decline of the steel industry, has seen the population fall from 20,000 residents in the 1940s to less than 4,000 in 2009, with the average home value at just \$6,000. Fetterman, physically imposing at 6'8, 300 pounds and covered in tattoos (including one of Braddock's zip code, 15104, and the date of all murders occurring in town during his term), won election in 2005 by a single vote. Fetterman, who earned a master's degree in public policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, also directs the town's only youth program and community center, helping teens stay in school, earn their GED and stay off the streets. His innovative approach to rebuilding Braddock— attracting artists and creating culture to foster a renaissance—has attracted the attention of *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Time* and “The Colbert Report.”

Bill Hudnut is the former four-term mayor of Indianapolis, serving from 1976 to 1991. During his terms he advanced the city's new “Unigov” concept and put Indianapolis on the map as a major American city. He is credited with negotiating the deal that brought the Colts to Indianapolis and helped the city land the Pan Am Games in 1987. After stepping down as mayor, Hudnut served posts at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, the Hudson Institute think tank in Indianapolis, and the Civic Federation in Chicago before assuming a Senior Fellow Emeritus post at The Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C. His work has won numerous honors including Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service (1986), City and State Magazine's Outstanding Mayor Award (1988), and the Rosa Park Award from the American Association of Affirmative Action in 1992. Hudnut is also an ordained Presbyterian minister and has published several books reflecting his experience in politics and religion.

Indiana author **Scott Russell Sanders** will moderate the Public Conversation. He has published 20 books, including novels, short stories, and literary nonfiction. His work appears regularly in many publications including *Harper's*, *Audubon*, *Orion*, and *Georgia Review*, among others. His latest book, *A Conservationist Manifesto*, was published this past spring. Sanders has received numerous literary awards and received the inaugural Indiana Humanities Awards in 2007. He is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English at Indiana University.

Spirit & Place is a collaborative community project managed by The Polis Center, part of the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. Major financial contributors include Lilly Endowment Inc.; Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation, Inc.; Central Indiana Community Foundation; TrendyMinds; Eli Lilly and Company; Butler University; IUPUI/IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI; the University of Indianapolis; Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library; as well as more than 200 other community partners and donors. For a free festival magazine, to see a full schedule of festival events, or more information, call The Polis Center at (317) 274-2455 or visit www.spiritandplace.org. Follow Spirit & Place on Twitter @spiritandplace or join the Facebook Fan Page by searching for Spirit and Place.

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