

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Dindy Yokel  
[dindy@dindycopr.com](mailto:dindy@dindycopr.com)  
(305) 215-3029

**GEE'S BEND QUILTERS ISSUE STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD**  
***Artists Show Continued Support for the Arnetts***

**GEE'S BEND, AL – (January 10, 2008)** – The Gee's Bend Quilters Collective and the Gee's Bend Foundation Board of Directors met on Sunday, December 30, 2007 to affirm the artists' support of the Arnett family and Tinwood. The artists iterated their full understanding of the damages that the current lawsuits are causing the Arnetts and the present and future of the Gee's Bend Quilters.

"As President of the Gee's Bend Foundation, I would like to state publicly that I strongly support the Arnetts and Tinwood. I have worked closely with Bill and Matt Arnett for 8 years and I believe their work ethic is above reproach and unquestionable. They have done wonderful things for the Quilters and our community. It saddens me to hear about such lawsuits being filed against the Arnetts after all that they have done for the Quilters," said Lovett Bennett.

The Quilters affirmed that they have been working with the Arnett's and their company, Tinwood, for 8 years by agreeing to participate in exhibitions, promoting and marketing their quilts and products that include quilt images. The artists stated that they have participated in meetings over the years with the Arnetts and all agreed that the royalties from the sales of quilts and quilts related-products are to be paid to the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective and the Gee's Bend Foundation (GBF).

"My experience with Bill and Matt Arnett has been positive since our first meeting. I truly believe that they have been upfront with me and have not taken advantage of me or the community. I believe that all the positive publicity generated by the Arnetts' work in support of the Quilters of Gee's Bend has helped bring back the ferry. I truly believe that there are many more good things in store for our community if we stand together with the Arnetts," said Mary Lee Bendolph.

Contrary to the allegations by Annie Mae Young and Loretta Pettway, the quilters indicated that they were well aware of the products and have approved their production and sale to support the Gee's Bend Foundation by Kathy Ireland Worldwide (KIWW) and other companies including Printed Culture, Anthropologie, Gallery Collection, Classic Rug Collection, Chronicle Books, Tinwood Books, Fotofolio, Ronnie Sellers Productions, Unicover and any other company that the Arnetts have arranged to benefit the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective and the Gee's Bend Foundation.

"As the director of the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective, what I've seen since the lawsuits came about has been a decrease in visitors to Gee's Bend and sales of quilts. At the Collective and when traveling to museums and events, I have had to spend more time telling people that I do not support the lawsuits or the actions of Annie Mae Young and Loretta Pettway instead of talking about the art and our extraordinary history and our good fortune due to the support of the Arnetts," says Mary Ann Pettway.

The women present confirmed that they have enjoyed the traveling "in luxury" to many states and museums with the Arnetts. The Arnetts arranged for them to stay at 5-star hotels, dine well and be paid fairly via honoraria, per diems, accommodations and airfare or transportation for their traveling and appearances in connection with museum exhibitions for the Quilts of Gee's Bend and Gee's Bend the Architecture of the Quilt as well as other promotional appearances as arranged for by the Arnetts.

"For years people have tried to stop William Arnett, a man with a vision, from showing the world that Gee's Bend quilts belong in museums. The lawsuit may put him in a bind, but it won't stop him. I thank William and Matt Arnett for giving the women of Gee's Bend the dream of a life time. I will continue to believe and support the Arnetts and their great work," said Louisiana Bendolph.

The royalties paid to the GBF, as was agreed to by the quilters since the beginning, was to be held in an account for use for the community good to be determined by the board of directors of the GBF; a statement that was unanimously cheered and reaffirmed by the artists present at the December 30 meeting. It was further acknowledged that the monies paid to the Gee's Bend Collective, as agreed upon by the quilters, was to be divided among the women and distributed as dividends to ensure that those women

who can no longer quilt -- because of poor vision or other health problems -- would continue to receive funds along with the active quilters.

“Being one of the younger quilters of Gee's Bend, I commend and most of all appreciate all the time, love and hard work that Bill and Matt Arnett gave of themselves in order to make Gee's Bend women and their Quilts so loved and respected in museums, galleries and most of the entire art world. I support them 100% percent,” said Loretta Bennett.

In summing up the meeting, the members of the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective said that they fully support the actions of the board of directors of the Gee's Bend Foundation to make their voices heard in order to protect them and their past and future activities from the negative impact on their reputations and earnings that the lawsuits brought by Annie Mae Young, Loretta Pettway and Lucinda Pettway Franklin have caused. It is their strong desire to show to the world their continued support of the Arnetts and the fame and legacy created by the Arnetts that they know is beneficial for all.

**###**

**Editors' Note:** U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama - Northern District: Case # 07-317 Annie Mae Young Vs. Tinwood Ventures; Case # 07-423 Loretta Pettway Vs. Tinwood Ventures and Case # 07-438 Lucinda Pettway Franklin Vs. Tinwood Ventures.