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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 12, 2015

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RHYTHM IS MY BEAT

New Book Published on Charleston Native and Rhythm Guitarist, Freddie Green
Charleston Jazz Initiative Hosts National Book Tour Events with Author/Son, Alfred Green

Charleston, SC – The Charleston Jazz Initiative (CJI), a project of the College of Charleston’s (C of C) School of the Arts, Arts Management Program, in partnership with the Jazz Studies Program, Department of Music, Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, and other sponsors, announce a series of events, August 27-29, 2015 to kick off the national book tour of author Alfred Green, the son of Charleston native and renowned rhythm guitarist, Freddie Green. All events are free (donations are suggested), open to the public, and are held at various locations at the College of Charleston. For more information, go to www.charlestonjazz.net, artsmgmt.cofc.edu, call (843) 953-5474 or (843) 953-6301 or email Dr. Karen Chandler at chandlerk@cofc.edu.

Rhythm Is My Beat chronicles Freddie Green’s life (1911-1987) and jazz career from his days growing up in Charleston, his music studies in the 1920s at the Jenkins Orphanage where he toured with the orphanage band as a vocalist and learned upholstery as a trade, to his nearly 50-year career as a legendary rhythm guitarist with the Count Basie Orchestra from 1937-1987. By Basie’s own account, Green was the pulse of the band, and along with Basie, Jo Jones, and Walter Page, he set the band’s pace and helped to define American swing. Together, they were arguably the definitive swinging rhythm section of the big band era. Green, who was hired by Basie and was the longest serving member of the band, is universally acknowledged as the greatest rhythm guitarist in jazz history.

Referred to as Mr. Rhythm, Freddie Green’s guitar technique was so unprecedented and innovative that it is often characterized as an art form. Drummer Louie Bellson in Alyn Shipton’s *A New History of Jazz*, describes Green’s unique technique this way: “Freddie Green...was one of the greatest rhythm players I ever heard in my life...he had a certain stroke with the right hand, that really was a great marriage to the right hand of a drummer, to the right hand of a bass player, and the right hand of a pianist. It was something that you had to watch.” From his early gigs at the Black Cat Club in Greenwich Village to his work with drummer and bebop rhythmic innovator Kenny Clarke, the development of jazz was enriched when impresario John Hammond recommended Green to Basie as a replacement for Claude Williams.

Rhythm Is My Beat includes interviews with guitarists and other musicians as well as jazz scholars who provide their analysis of Freddie Green’s sound. It also includes some great stories – a successful feat by author-son to

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personalize and demystify his musician-father. One of them is what the critic and namesake of the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy, A.B. Spellman, once recalled at a CJI event in 2005: “Of course, he [Freddie] had an affair with Billie Holiday, who said that he was one of only three men whom she ever loved...you can hear them together on some of Billie’s greatest records.” These and other stories of Green’s life and career will be highlighted in the following series of events at the College of Charleston:

Thursday, August 27 - 7:00 pm - Avery Research Center / 125 Bull Street

BookChat / Signing and Reception with Alfred Green

www.freddiegreenrhythm.com

Green will tell stories about his father’s young life in Charleston, his legendary career with Count Basie and his orchestra, and the innovative guitar technique of Freddie Green

Friday, August 28 – 3:30-5:00 pm – Recital Hall, Simons Center for the Arts / 54 St. Philip Street

Jazz Repertory Class / Tyler Ross, C of C Professor of Guitar

Special Guest: Michael Pettersen, Guitarist, Freddie Green Historian

Prof. Tyler Ross opens up to the public his jazz repertory class with guitar and other jazz students to hear Michael Pettersen discuss Green’s guitar technique. Pettersen’s longstanding work on Green is documented at www.freddiegreen.org.

Saturday, August 29 – 7:00 pm – Recital Hall, Simons Center for the Arts / 54 St. Philip Street

Book Presentation with Alfred Green

Special Guest: Adam Parker, Arts Editor, *Post and Courier*

Green will provide an informative, interactive and entertaining presentation about Freddie Green followed by a Q & A with Adam Parker; a book signing will immediately follow the event

Concert by Franklin Street Jazz Ensemble, Quentin E. Baxter, Musical Director

20 Franklin Street in Charleston, the original home of the Jenkins Orphanage, is the inspiration behind this ensemble and its music. The band will play compositions by Freddie Green as well as other music that is associated with or influenced by Green and the Count Basie Orchestra.

The events are sponsored by the Arts Management Program and Jazz Studies Program/Department of Music in the School of the Arts, Avery Research Center, and Barnes & Noble/College of Charleston Bookstore at the College of Charleston; BME, LLC, Jazz Artists of Charleston, Jenkins Institute for Children, and the Charleston Jazz Club; and funded by the Charleston Scientific and Cultural Education Fund. For information on Freddie Green and *Rhythm Is My Beat*, see www.freddiegreen.org and www.freddiegreenrhythm.com. For more information on the events, visit www.charlestonjazz.net or artsmgmt.cofc.edu, email chandlerk@cofc.edu, or call 843-953-5474 or 843-953-6301.

About the Author: Alfred Green, a retired social worker, photojournalist and former Vice President of Book Production at Academic Press Inc. in San Diego, was born in New York City in 1938 where Count Basie’s bands served as the backdrop for the author’s transition from adolescence into adulthood. As a freelance photographer with membership in the American Society of Magazine Photographers, Green’s assignments were both domestic and international. He covered the 12th Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Conference in Kampala, Uganda. His photographs have been exhibited at The Museum of Fine Arts in Springfield, Massachusetts, Studio Museum of Harlem, Ford Foundation, Multi-Cultural Gallery in San Diego, and the Diana Galleries in New York. He received a Masters degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California and retired from the Los Angeles Unified School District as a Mental Health Consultant. He lives on the West Coast with his wife, Judy.

The Charleston Jazz Initiative (CJI) is a jazz history and research project at the College of Charleston in partnership with the Arts Management Program, School of the Arts and the Avery Research Center. It documents the careers of many jazz musicians who are native to South Carolina or who were trained with the famed Jenkins Orphanage Bands in Charleston. Many had impressive careers as sidemen on the bandstands of Duke Ellington, Count Basie and other bandleaders of the swing era. CJI’s initiatives include an Oral History Project, a jazz archive based at Avery that includes a collection of Freddie Green memorabilia, and other projects that examine South Carolina’s contribution to jazz in America and Europe. www.charlestonjazz.net.