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**For Immediate Release**

## GSU Awarding Honorary Doctorates to Charles Lotton, Laurens Grant

University Park, Illinois, May 7, 2012 – Governors State University will award honorary doctorates to renowned glass artist Charles Lotton and Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker and journalist Laurens Grant.

For the first time, GSU will host two ceremonies on a single day, May 19. Lotton, of Crete, will speak at the 10 a.m. ceremony. Grant, who grew up in Chicago's south suburbs and now resides in New York City, will speak at the 5 p.m. ceremony.

Charles Lotton, who has been creating distinctive, beautiful art glass for more than 40 years, was a successful businessman whose fascination with glass began when he was introduced to the Carnival glass collection of a customer of his hair salon. He soon began his own collection, which led to a visit to the Art Institute of Chicago and investigation and experimentation into how art glass is created.

Lotton never received formal art instruction. It was through experimentation and inspiration, by trial and error, and with the support of his wife and children that he became an artist. His unique and creative techniques and the materials he conceived were originally produced over a furnace in the glass blowing studio he built in his backyard. It was there that he developed his singular formula for creating magnificent colors of glass.

Lotton remains a creative and innovative force in the art glass world. His paperweights, vases, perfume bottles, and lamp shades both honor the Tiffany style and reflect Lotton's extraordinary creativity in color and design.

Laurens Grant has served as producer of award-winning documentaries that provide unforgettable insight into the stain of slavery, Jim Crow racism, and the resilience and heroism of African Americans throughout the nation's history.

In 2003, she was coordinating producer of "The Murder of Emmett Till" on PBS's The American Experience, which was honored with a Sundance Jury Award, Primetime Emmy, and a Peabody Award for Best Documentary. In 2011, Grant won a Primetime Emmy as the producer of the documentary "Freedom Riders," which also appeared on The American Experience. She is director of "Jesse Owens," about the four-time Olympic gold medalist, which made its debut this month on PBS.

Before working in documentaries, Grant was a foreign correspondent in Latin America. She headed the Panama bureau for Reuters, and wrote about Latin American politics and culture for many publications. A native of Homewood, Grant is a Northwestern University journalism graduate who also worked for The Star Newspaper, in the south suburbs, and as a freelance journalist for the Chicago Tribune.

Governors State University Spring Commencement will take place on Saturday, May 19, at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., at the Tinley Park Convention Center, Tinley Park, Illinois. Admission is by ticket only.