



NEWS AND INFORMATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

03/26/2003

Americans for the Arts Honors Senator Thad Cochran

Mississippi Senator Receives 'Governmental Leadership in the Arts Award'

WASHINGTON, D.C. —Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts, in conjunction with the United States Conference of Mayors, today presented its Congressional "Government Leadership in the Arts Award" to United States Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi.

Senator Cochran was recognized during Americans for the Arts' annual Congressional Arts Breakfast as part of "Arts Advocacy Day" on Capitol Hill. Well-known film and television artists and grassroots arts advocates from across the country are in Washington, D.C. this week to meet with the Administration and members of Congress to discuss the importance of arts funding at both the federal and local levels.

"Senator Cochran is the U.S. Senate's true proponent of arts education," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "Young people throughout the nation have opportunities and experiences in the arts as a result of Senator Cochran's tireless work. We are proud to recognize him with this award."

Senator Cochran is a strong supporter of arts education. As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he has been a prime mover in funding the arts education program of the U.S. Department of Education.

"We are delighted that Senator Cochran has received this prestigious award," said Tim Hedgepeth, executive director of the Mississippi Arts Commission and advocate who nominated Senator Cochran for the award.

"Senator Cochran has been a long-time champion of the arts in Mississippi and the United States. Among his numerous achievements, The Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education (CREATE) Act, which he introduced in 1999, has had far reaching impact in

incorporating the arts in the regular curriculum. We applaud him for his leadership and continued support of the arts."

In 1999, the Senate approved Senator Cochran's resolution designating March as Arts Education Month, encouraging schools, students, educators, parents, and other community members to engage in activities designed to celebrate the positive impact and public benefits of the arts and to integrate the arts into the school curriculum.

Senator Cochran's commitment to the arts and to education runs deep. The child of a teacher and a school principal, he studied voice and piano, giving a recital during his senior year of high school. He has also written legislation that provides federal funding for teacher training, libraries, and educational television. He has also fought against elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Federal arts agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) have experienced difficulties on Capitol Hill with funds topping out at \$115.7 million and \$124.9 million, respectively, representing very small increases.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

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