



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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09/03/2008

Americans for the Arts Announces 2008 National Arts Awardees

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts announces its annual National Arts Awards honorees. The awards recognize those artists and arts leaders who exhibit exemplary national leadership and whose work demonstrates extraordinary artistic achievement. They are organizations and individuals—artists, business leaders, and patrons—who understand that the arts enrich people and communities alike. The National Arts Awards will be presented in New York City on October 6 as part of National Arts and Humanities Month.

Following are this year's National Arts Awards honorees:

Lifetime Achievement Award — Dame Julie Andrews

Dame Andrews is being honored for her profound contributions to both music and acting and for serving as a great role model and mentor for all aspiring artists. She is a champion of the literary arts and a dedicated advocate for childhood literacy. Dame Andrews is a treasured member of the arts community and a source of great national and international pride. The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to a nationally recognized, established artist with a history of exemplary artistic accomplishment in his or her field.

Frederick R. Weisman Award for Philanthropy in the Arts — Joan W. Harris

Harris is being honored for her many contributions to a wide variety of arts disciplines. Her support in her hometown of Chicago has played a pivotal role in nurturing the cultural fabric of the city, her state, and our nation. She is a cultural role-model for the entire country. The Frederick R. Weisman Award for Philanthropy in the Arts is presented to an individual with a demonstrable history of philanthropic giving to one or more major arts institutions. **Don Randel**, *President of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation* will present Harris with the award.

Kitty Carlisle Hart Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Arts — Yoko Ono

Ono is not only an artist of great stature and influence, but she has spent her life as an

advocate for positive social change and as a champion for world peace. These qualities and her major artistic achievements are some of the reasons she is being honored. The Kitty Carlisle Hart Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Arts celebrates a lifetime of artistic excellence, as well as a commitment to civic involvement, and was established to provide permanent recognition of the extraordinary contributions to the arts by Mrs. Hart. **Michael Kimmelman**, *Chief Art Critic for The New York Times*, will present Ono with the award.

Arts Advocacy Award — Phil Ramone

Ramone is being honored for his passionate, career-spanning work as an arts advocate. His active engagement in music and service related organizations, has made him a champion of music educational programs. The Arts Advocacy Award is presented to a noted artist or arts advocate with a track record of contributing to the advancement of arts and arts education. *Pop music icon, Billy Joel*, will present Ramone with the award.

Young Artist Award for Artistic Excellence — Kehinde Wiley

Wiley is an artist who has taken traditional approaches to Western art history and applied them in ways that beg a questioning of contemporary art, as well as social standards and the telling of history. He excels at using historical modes of art to highlight anomalies within our contemporary culture. The Young Artist Award for Artistic Excellence is presented to an individual who has achieved incredible accomplishments and exemplary leadership, while still early in their careers. **Thelma Golden**, *Director, Studio Museum in Harlem*, will present Wiley with the award.

Corporate Citizenship in the Arts Award — J. Barry Griswell, The Principal Financial Group

Through partnerships with nonprofit organizations across the United States, The Principal Financial Group has a long-standing tradition of community activism and support for a variety of programs including the arts. The Principal Financial Group began supporting the arts in the 1930s to promote cultural awareness, reach diverse audiences, and foster creative thinking among employees through employee participation in the arts. J. Barry Griswell is chairman, president and chief executive officer of the Principal Financial Group. The Corporate Citizenship in the Arts Award is presented to a high-profile, major corporation with a record of contributing to arts and cultural institutions or initiatives. **John Pappajohn** of *Pappajohn Capital Resources and Equity Dynamics Inc.*, will present Griswell with the award.

The honorees will receive their awards at a gala dinner on October 6 chaired by **Maria Bell**, member of the Americans for the Arts Board of Directors. Co-chairing the event alongside Bell are **Edythe and Eli Broad, Isabella and Theodor Dalenson, Sheila C. Johnson and the Honorable William T. Newman, Jr.** and **Julie and Edward Minskoff**.

The evening will feature an installation of works by media artist **Jennifer Steinkamp**.

Support for the National Arts Awards has come from individuals, foundations, and corporations. **John Pappajohn, President, Equity Dynamics, Inc.**, is the event's corporate chair. Additional supporters include: Sheila C. Johnson, Target, and Lehman Brothers.

The National Arts Awards have been presented by Americans for the Arts since 1996. Past honorees have included, among others: Edward Albee, Wallis Annenberg, Alec Baldwin, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Leonard Bernstein, Rep. John Brademas, Chuck Close, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Pierre Dulaine, Aretha Franklin, Frank Gehry, Martha Graham, Agnes Gund, Jake Gyllenhaal, Kitty Carlisle Hart, Helen Hayes, Sheila C. Johnson, Ellsworth Kelly, Jeff Koons, Jacob Lawrence, John Legend, Gerald M. Levin, Wynton Marsalis, Natalie Portman, Cindy Sherman, Beverly Sills, Anna Deavere Smith, David Rockefeller, Isaac Stern, Mena Suvari, Paul Taylor, Uma Thurman, Kerry Washington, and Sanford I. Weill.

***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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