



## NEWS AND INFORMATION

---

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

01/18/2005

### **Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, Meridian (MS) Mayor John Robert Smith, and Legendary Musician Peter Yarrow Receive 2005 Public Leadership in the Arts Awards**

WASHINGTON, D.C. —Americans for the Arts and The U.S. Conference of Mayors today presented the 2005 Public Leadership in the Arts Awards to Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, Meridian (MS) Mayor John Robert Smith, and legendary musician Peter Yarrow. The awards honor elected officials and artists who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in advancement of the arts.

The awards were presented at the Mayors Arts Luncheon today as part of the U.S. Conference of Mayors' 73rd winter meeting in Washington, DC. The awards are part of a series of Public Leadership in the Arts Awards given annually by Americans for the Arts and The U.S. Conference of Mayors since 1997.

"These four honorees are using the arts as a springboard to improve the lives of Americans of all ages," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "They have proved that strong arts programs are integral to making better American communities and citizens."

"We honor these visionaries who have not only touched, but more importantly, changed the lives of many through their support of the arts. Their contributions to our nation's communities, particularly our children, are invaluable," said Akron, OH, Mayor and Conference President Donald L. Plusquellic.

**Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley** receives the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for his unwavering support for arts programs in Chicago since taking office in 1989. When the Cultural Affairs Commission needed a home, he called for the restoration of a beautiful old library where now, in addition to offices, daily events are open to the public in a rotating exhibition and performance center. His leadership in presenting the "Parade of Cows" sculptures led to numerous other cities replicating the same concept. Most recently, Mayor Daley spearheaded the creation of Millennium Park, a \$450 million cultural mega-project in the heart of Chicago, which has evolved into one of the most significant millennium projects in the world. Mayor Daley, along with his wife Maggie, established the "Gallery 37" program

which has been recognized nationally as one the leading arts education programs in the country.

**Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee** receives the **2005 National Award for State Arts Leadership** in recognition of the work that he has done to create opportunities for grade school children to participate in the arts across the state. Governor Huckabee passed a bill that requires every public elementary school in the state to provide at least 40 minutes of instruction in music or visual art every week. A love of music led the Governor to form a rock band with a few staff members. Due to their success, they were asked to play for an event at his political party's national convention in 2004 and during this year's Presidential Inaugural activities in Washington, DC.

**Meridian (MS) Mayor John Robert Smith** receives the **2005 National Award for Local Arts Leadership** for his arts advocacy throughout his city and state since first taking office in 1993. He has promoted city, county, state, and federal fundraising and public/private support for Mississippi State University's Riley Education and Performing Arts Center, a \$31 million project to restore the Grand Opera House of Mississippi and develop an arts education and conference center in historic downtown Meridian. Mayor Smith not only serves on the board of the Grand Opera of Mississippi but has also taken leading roles in several productions including, *A Christmas Carol*, *Camelot*, and *My Fair Lady*.

**Peter Yarrow**, renown throughout the world as an individual performer and as a member of the folk trio Peter, Paul, and Mary, receives the **2005 Legendary Artist Award**, which recognizes artists who use their talent and public persona to raise awareness for causes that benefit the public good. Yarrow is a recipient of numerous Grammy Awards, an Emmy, and is universally recognized for using his prominence to promote positive civic change and to inspire society's commitment to advancing the arts. Peter's most ambitious undertaking to date, Operation Respect, offers a free, classroom-based program called "Don't Laugh At Me" and is based on his passionate belief that music, with its power to build community and catalyze change, can be a powerful source of inspiration for children to grow into caring, tolerant, and peace-seeking adults.

**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](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org).

Founded in 1933, the U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with a population of 30,000 or more. The primary roles of the Conference of Mayors are to: promote the development of effective national urban/suburban policy; strengthen federal-city relationships; ensure that federal policy meets urban needs; provide mayors with leadership and management tools; and create a forum in which mayors can share ideas and information. Find more information at [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org).

###