



NEWS AND INFORMATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

06/19/2007

Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors present the 2007 Public Leadership

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors present the 2007 Public Leadership in the Arts Awards to Miami Mayor **Manuel A. Diaz**; Arizona Governor **Janet Napolitano**; the human services organization, **The Actors Fund**; music industry executive and *American Idol* judge, **Randy Jackson**; and Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winning actor **Jimmy Smits**. The awards honor elected officials and artists or arts organizations that have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the advancement of the arts.

The awards will be presented at a plenary session as part of the U.S. Conference of Mayors' 75th annual meeting held this year in Los Angeles on Sunday, June 24. The awards have been given annually by Americans for the Arts and The U.S. Conference of Mayors since 1997.

"We honor Governor Napolitano and Mayor Diaz for their unwavering support for the arts and for making significant and lasting improvements to the arts landscape in their areas," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "Both Mayor Diaz and Governor Napolitano have helped make the arts even more accessible in their respective communities. We are also proud to recognize The Actors Fund for the excellent programs it has offered for artists around the country for the past 125 years. And to Jimmy Smits and Randy Jackson whose leadership and ambition in their fields are inspirational."

"Every year, The U.S. Conference of Mayors recognizes the efforts of those who believe as much as we do, that the arts are the heart of our society. Arts and culture help shape a city's quality of life, but mayors also understand the connection between the arts and business and the arts' impact on the local economy," said Tom Cochran, executive director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Miami Mayor Manuel A. Diaz receives the **2007 National Award for Local Arts Leadership** for expanding the cultural agenda of the City of Miami and for establishing the Mayor's Office of Film & Cultural Affairs. Mayor Diaz has budgeted more than \$300,000 annually for the support of signature events and has additionally budgeted a half million dollars for distribution each year to cultural organizations and events through a grant process. He played a central role in the creation and development of Museum Park, a previously neglected 29-acre city waterfront area. It will now be home to two major museums and public gardens. Museum Park will join its neighbor, the new Carnival Center for the Performing Arts, to establish downtown Miami as a premier destination for the cultural arts.

Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano receives the **2007 National Award for State Arts Leadership** for her ambitious and committed support for the arts. During her inaugural year as governor, Governor Napolitano issued three politically risky line item vetoes that saved public funding for the arts in Arizona. Governor Napolitano, herself a high school musician and a lifelong opera fan, supports the arts not only in words and policy, but also as an avid attendee. She hosts the Governor's Arts Awards Dinner, which celebrates individuals, organizations, and corporations for their outstanding contributions to the arts in the state.

The Actors Fund receives the **National Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts** for its longstanding dedication to providing a wide range of essential human services for more than 8,000 entertainment and performing arts professionals. For 125 years, The Actors Fund has been woven through the rich culture of American performing arts and entertainment by providing human services such as critical social services programs, health services, employment and training, emergency financial assistance, health insurance counseling, and skilled nursing and assisted living care to thousands of artists.

Randy Jackson receives the **National Artist Advocacy Award** for his long-time support of music education and his inspirational leadership as an artist and producer. A 20-year music industry veteran and Grammy Award-winning producer, Randy Jackson started out at the young age of 13 playing bass guitar and got his big break when he joined the critically acclaimed band Journey. Jackson recently completed his sixth season as America's favorite judge on Fox's record-breaking show *American Idol*. He has also been a long time supporter of music education programs across America. Most recently, he served as one of the music industry's ambassadors in helping to secure \$500 million of new funds for arts education in California's public schools. In addition to working with individual state legislators, he impressed upon Governor Schwarzenegger to allocate this historic level of funding for arts education. Mr. Jackson has also taken his message to Washington, DC, to raise federal money for art and music education.

Jimmy Smits receives the **National Arts Leadership Award** for helping to make the arts accessible for all Americans. Whether he is playing a congressman and president-elect on *The West Wing*, a Senator in *Star Wars*, a detective on *NYPD Blue*, or a lawyer on *L.A. Law*, Jimmy Smits is an outstanding and accomplished actor and producer. In 1997, Mr. Smits co-founded the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts. This organization, based in Washington, DC, has raised more than \$850,000 for scholarships and is dedicated to advancing the presence of Latinos in the media, telecommunications, and entertainment industries. The foundation offers graduate scholarships to Latino students at prominent colleges and universities and works to expand career opportunities for existing talent in all aspects of entertainment and the performing Arts.

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.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.

###