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MARIAN ANDERSON AWARD TO HONOR BILL COSBY
Award Gala with The Philadelphia Orchestra will take place on April 6, 2010

Philadelphia, PA—December 22, 2009—Mayor Michael Nutter announced today that Bill Cosby, Ed.D.—comedian and educator—will be the next recipient of the Marian Anderson Award. Mr. Cosby will accept the Award at a Gala Concert produced in partnership with The Philadelphia Orchestra, which will take place on Tuesday, April 6, 2010, at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

In making the announcement, Mayor Nutter noted, "Since 1998 the Marian Anderson Award has honored individuals who have helped change society through their art and the courage of the convictions. While all of the previous honorees have had enormous impact on our culture, Bill Cosby is the first life-long Philadelphian to be honored. His connections to Philadelphia are deep and his range of achievement is unparalleled. We are enormously proud of his many achievements and are delighted that the Marian Anderson Award has chosen Bill Cosby to honor."

In commenting on his agreement to accept the Marian Anderson Award, Bill Cosby stated that, "I am humbled. The clarity of viewing racism from Marian Anderson's DAR rejection proves that racism is a waste of time, precious time."

Pamela Browner White, Chair of the Marian Anderson Award, spoke about the selection process: "We were very much in agreement that we wanted the next Award to honor someone with strong Philadelphia connections. No one has a stronger connection to Philadelphia than Bill Cosby, or a broader positive cultural impact. For more than five decades, Bill Cosby has been someone that has made us smile. His humor has almost always been about neighborhoods, families, kids and marriage. He's been the face and the voice of an African American middle class family that, before Dr. Huxtable, had been invisible in mainstream media. Bill Cosby, a man of strong values, has inspired thousands of young adults to achieve their dream of a college education. Most recently, he has used his profile to raise the sensitive discussion of accountability within the African American community. We honor his courage to speak his mind and we honor his investment in a community that many have forgotten. We applaud not only what he has done for our country but also what he has done for Philadelphia.

"We also felt that, moving forward, we wanted to position the Award at the beginning of each year rather than at its close, as we have done for a number of years. Spring is a time of new beginnings and since we are now beginning a new decade of service we will be bringing the Award to the public in the spring of each year. We are really looking forward to working with The Philadelphia Orchestra again and to preparing another amazing Marian Anderson Award Gala Concert with wonderful guest artists helping us to honor Bill Cosby."

One of America's most prolific comedians of all time, Bill Cosby has dazzled generations of fans with his comedy routines, which transcend age, gender, and cultural barriers, and have been captured on his iconic television series and best-selling albums and books, such as the groundbreaking *The Cosby Show* and *Fatherhood*.

Mr. Cosby broke television's racial barrier with a role in *I Spy*, becoming the first African American to costar on a television series and win three consecutive Emmy awards for "Outstanding Lead Actor" in a dramatic series. The veteran comic hosted the Emmy-winning cartoon *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, which began airing in the 1970s and was made into a film in 2004. The show, based on Cosby's childhood in Philadelphia, was designed to educate and entertain.

The former Navy serviceman's illustrious list of accomplishments includes roles on the children's educational show *Electric Company*, and creating and producing the Emmy Award-winning *Little Bill*, which is based on his bestselling book series.

Perhaps Mr. Cosby's greatest contribution to American entertainment and culture is *The Cosby Show*, a television series about a close-knit, upper class black family. Cosby said his intent was to portray an American family. *Time* magazine called the show "an encouraging sign of maturity in matters of race." *The Cosby Show* dominated the No. 1 spot for years, earning broad critical praise. *Life* magazine described the program as "a gentle, whimsical, warmhearted" show whose "delicious ordinariness of its pleasures and tribulations has given millions a fresh, laughter-splashed perspective on their own domestic lives."

For his philanthropic efforts and positive influence as a performer and author, Bill Cosby was honored with a 1998 Kennedy Center Honors Award. In 2002 he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor, and in 2009 he was the recipient of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor.

In concluding the press reception, Ms. White expressed gratitude to Wachovia, A *Wells Fargo Company*, which has served as the lead sponsor of the Award since its creation in 1998. "Marian Anderson is a true Philadelphia icon and this honor serves as a tribute to her life and artistry," said Hugh Long, Wachovia's Regional President for Pennsylvania and Delaware." "This is one of the greatest awards that the City of Philadelphia can bestow, and we are delighted that Wachovia is again playing a leadership role in this celebration. The Marian Anderson Award enriches Philadelphia's arts community, adding immeasurably to its visibility and prestige, and we want to do our part to make sure this is the premier event of its kind anywhere.

Ms. White recognized the extensive support provided annually by the Award's corporate sponsors, PECO, Comcast, and PRWT, along with the support of the Commonwealth, and the important support of long-time hotel sponsor Sofitel. Ms. White concluded her remarks by thanking David L. Cohen of Comcast for agreeing to Chair the Gala Dinner for the fourth year and J.E. Caldwell & Co. for sponsoring the beautiful Award object presented at every Award Gala since 1998.

MARIAN ANDERSON AWARD

The Marian Anderson Award honors artists whose leadership on behalf of a humanitarian cause(s) or issue benefits society. Previous recipients include Maya Angelou and Norman Lear (2008), Richard Gere (2007), Sidney Poitier (2006), Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis (2005), Oprah Winfrey (2003), Danny Glover (2002), Quincy Jones (2001), Elizabeth Taylor (2000), Gregory Peck (1999), and Harry Belafonte, (1998). No Award was given in 2004 or 2009.

Created in 1998, the Award is named for the great Philadelphian and American singer Marian Anderson, and is produced and administered under the direction of J. Patrick Moran. Since its inception, the Award program has provided more than \$500,000 in free public programs, residencies, commissions, and grants to young artists.

This year's Gala Performance, the details of which will be announced in January, will be preceded by the annual black-tie Gala Dinner, also at the Kimmel Center, which is a fundraiser for the Marian Anderson Award and its grant programs that support young artists. Those interested in attending the Gala Dinner, which includes a premium ticket to the Gala Performance, can call the Marian Anderson Award office at 215-893-1837 to receive an invitation. Single tickets for the Gala Performance are available now by calling Ticket Philadelphia at 215-893-1999 or by visiting The Philadelphia Orchestra's website at www.philorch.org.

MARIAN ANDERSON

Marian Anderson, the most celebrated contralto of the 20th century, was born in Philadelphia on February 27, 1897, to an African-American family of modest means. Recognized for her extraordinary musical talent, as well as her generosity and commitment to others, Ms. Anderson was a master of repertoire across operatic, recital, and American traditional genres. Throughout her musical career, she played an incalculably vital role in the acceptance of African-American musicians in the classical musical.

In 1957 Ms. Anderson was appointed by the U.S. Department of State to serve as a Special Envoy to the Far East, and the following year President Dwight D. Eisenhower named her to the post of delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations. She sang at President John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961 and in 1963 President Lyndon B. Johnson bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon her. On her 75th birthday, in 1974, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution ordering a special gold medal minted in her honor. On April 8, 1993, Marian Anderson died at the age of 96 in Portland, Oregon.