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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2007  
“MAYOR’S AWARDS FOR ARTS & CULTURE”**

*John Leguizamo Hosts Ceremony Honoring Outstanding Contributions to City’s Cultural Life*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg tonight presented the Mayor’s Awards for Arts & Culture to seven individuals and organizations in celebration of their outstanding contributions to New York City’s cultural life. The event, held at the Teatro Heckscher at El Museo del Barrio, was hosted by actor and author John Leguizamo, and featured a distinguished lineup of honorees and performers. The event was coordinated by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the largest funder of arts and culture in the nation, providing more than \$168 million in annual support and \$1.4 billion in capital funding for cultural organizations throughout New York City. The Mayor was joined by First Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris, Chair of the Mayor’s Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission Agnes Gund, and Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin.

“Tonight’s honorees embody an unparalleled commitment to artistic excellence and accessibility throughout the five boroughs, and demonstrate why New York City supports the arts,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “Every New Yorker deserves access to great art, and our City’s unique model of public-private support for culture helps ensure that New York continues to be the place where diverse artists and audiences meet.”

“New York City continues to invest such a significant level of resources in the arts because we recognize the billions of dollars of economic activity that are generated by visitors to our cultural institutions, arts organizations and live performance venues,” said First Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris. “Nonprofit arts organizations and the visitors they bring to New York generate more than \$11 billion in annual economic activity. Culture is one of the cornerstones of our five borough economic development strategy, because the arts contribute to job growth, safety and quality of life for all New Yorkers.”

“Mayor Bloomberg understands that the arts help make New York City great, and nobody should take that for granted,” said Agnes Gund. “The Department of Cultural Affairs provides the base of support that cultural organizations and artists need to make this City a fabulous place to live and work.”

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“The honorees and performers here offer a glimpse of the incredible range of artistic endeavor in New York City – emerging and established, community and international,” said Commissioner Levin. “This ceremony allows us to celebrate this administration’s role in nurturing and strengthening cultural organizations in every neighborhood through funding, technical assistance and advocacy. We are particularly grateful to Agnes Gund and the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission for their leadership, to El Museo del Barrio for hosting this event in the magnificent Teatro Heckscher, and to tonight’s generous sponsors.”

Representing the extraordinary range of cultural activity across New York City, tonight’s awards were presented to:

- Philippe de Montebello – Director, Metropolitan Museum of Art  
For championing curatorial excellence, education and public access.
- Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant – Founding Principal, P.S. 315, Brooklyn  
For her extraordinary leadership as Founding Principal of the Elementary School of the Performing Arts.
- The New York Fringe Festival – New York City’s largest multi-arts festival  
For showcasing bold performances by established and emerging artists alike. Accepted by Elena Holy, Producing Artistic Director.
- The Point Community Development Corporation – Hunts Point, Bronx  
For its dedication to the cultural and economic revitalization of the South Bronx. Accepted by Maria Torres, President and Chief Operating Officer.
- Anna Deavere Smith – Actress, playwright, teacher and author  
For her unparalleled talent as one of the great American actresses and playwrights of our time.
- Time Warner Inc. – The world’s leading media and entertainment company  
For its commitment to making culture accessible to all New Yorkers. Accepted by Jeff Bewkes, President and Chief Operating Officer.
- George Way – Staten Island-based collector of early English furniture  
For his enthusiasm and commitment to sharing the joy of connoisseurship with all New Yorkers.

The event featured artists that capture the diversity of New York City culture, including puppeteer Basil Twist; performance artist Shaun “El C” Leonardo, whose work appears in *El Museo’s Bienal: The (S) Files*; singer Edna Robinson, one of Astoria Performing Arts Center’s “Senior Stars”; Music Director Jeffrey Campos of the Astoria Performing Arts Center; FreeStyle Arts, the artist collective, who created site-specific participatory lanyard sculptures for the entry courtyard and the stage; and comic voiceover by stage and screen star David Hyde Pierce.

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The Mayor's Awards for Arts & Culture were made possible by The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, with generous gifts from: the Lily Auchincloss Foundation; Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro; Judith and Robert Rubin; the Silverweed Foundation; the Laurie M. Tisch Foundation; Jeanette Sarkisian Wagner and Paul Wagner, and Bedell Cellars.

### **About the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs**

The Department of Cultural Affairs is the largest funder of the arts in the United States. In 2008, the agency supported 886 cultural organizations through \$168 million in annual program support, and has committed \$1.4 billion in capital funding for 215 projects over the next four years.

Through the Materials for the Arts program, the agency provides 685 tons of usable goods and materials to more than 3,000 non-profit organizations and public schools annually. Through the Percent for Art program, the City commissions individual artists to create public art for civic structures.

The agency is an advocate for the City's cultural community, providing technical assistance to individual organizations, developing promotional initiatives to boost participation in the City's cultural life, and articulating the profound impact of culture on New York City's quality of life and economic well being.

### **About the Mayor's Awards for Arts & Culture**

The Mayor's Awards for Arts & Culture were created in 1976, when the Department of Cultural Affairs was founded, and were given almost annually until 1994. Mayor Bloomberg revived the awards in 2004, with the assistance of Cultural Affairs and a newly-established Mayor's Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission. Agnes Gund chairs the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission, whose members are a diverse and distinguished group of advocates for the City's non-profit cultural community.

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