

RICHARD GERE TO RECEIVE 2007 MARIAN ANDERSON AWARD
Award Gala with Philadelphia Orchestra to take place Monday, November 12, 2007,
at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

Philadelphia, June 19, 2007 – Mayor John F. Street announced today that the critically acclaimed actor and activist Richard Gere will receive the 2007 Marian Anderson Award. The Award will be conferred at the conclusion of a Gala Tribute Concert produced in partnership with The Philadelphia Orchestra on Monday, November 12, 2007, at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. In making the announcement, Mayor Street noted that "We are proud to honor Richard Gere with the Marian Anderson Award". "His accomplishments as an actor are only surpassed by his accomplishments as a humanitarian and as an advocate for human issues around the world." "We are particularly pleased to honor Mr. Gere this year as it will mark the first time that the Marian Anderson Award will be conferred upon a native Philadelphian."

The annual award is given to a critically acclaimed artist humanitarian – an individual whose support for a cause(s) has upheld humanitarian principles and/or benefited society. The Marian Anderson Award carries with it a \$100,000 unrestricted prize.

Pamela A. Crawley, Chair of the Marian Anderson Award, commented on the particular significance of this year's Award recipient. "In honoring Richard Gere, we celebrate the achievements of an outstanding artist and humanitarian. He has used his remarkable career as an actor to support his unparalleled advocacy for some of the world's most vulnerable populations. He has traveled the globe supporting efforts that allow people to live in health, in the integrity of their cultures, and with the fundamental human rights that all citizens of the world must possess. These are the qualities of a leader, and we are deeply honored by his acceptance and look forward to welcoming him to Philadelphia in November."

James Undercofler, President and CEO of The Philadelphia Orchestra Association, noted that: "We are delighted to partner with the Marian Anderson Award once again this year as they honor such a dedicated humanitarian as Richard Gere," said Philadelphia Orchestra Association President and CEO James Undercofler.

"Marian Anderson was such an important figure in the music world and a part of The Philadelphia Orchestra's history, having performed with us numerous times throughout her career. Invoking the power of music in her name is a fitting way to pay tribute to Mr. Gere.

Crawley gave special thanks to Wachovia, which has been the lead sponsor of the Marian Anderson Award since its founding. Wachovia's commitment to 2007 brings its total investment in the Award program to \$2.7 million since 1998. "Marian Anderson is a true Philadelphia icon and this honor serves as a tribute to her life and artistry," said Hugh Long, CEO for Wachovia's MidAtlantic Banking Group. "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.”

Richard Gere emerged very quickly as a lead actor of unique power in a film career which now spans more than 30 years and includes over 40 films. At the beginning of his career he established himself as a screen presence in *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977), following that with his performance in the cinematic masterpiece *Days of Heaven* (1978). These movies preceded additional iconic roles in films that grew to include *American Gigolo* (1980), *An Officer and A Gentleman* (1982), *Pretty Woman* (1990), and *Unfaithful* and *Chicago* (2002). His latest film, *Hoax* (2007), has drawn broad critical acclaim.

Years before artists of his generation began to assume the mantle of advocacy and activism, Richard Gere began the dual journey of the artist humanitarian. As early as 1978 he began lending support to the cause of Tibetans who had been both persecuted and driven from their homeland by China, in a process that amounts to cultural genocide and continues today. In the early eighties, Gere also became one of the first outspoken advocates for those living with HIV/AIDS. Having achieved an artistic career that positioned him at the pinnacle of public interest, he has used that position to assist those in need, and he has remained constant in his advocacy for both Tibet and HIV/AIDS to this day.

Richard Gere was the founding chairman of Tibet House in New York. He created and sponsored the International Year of Tibet in 1991, culminating in His Holiness the Dalai Lama's historic visit to New York. Upon leaving Tibet House in 1992, Mr. Gere became involved with the International Campaign for Tibet in Washington, DC and since 1995, has served as Chairman of the Board. From this position, he has addressed the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, the U.S. House of Representatives, the European Parliament, and the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva. In 1999 and 2003, Gere sponsored the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to New York City and will do so again in 2007.

Through both the Gere Foundation and his public charity [Healing the Divide](#), Mr. Gere continues to be a longtime supporter of other humanitarian aid, human rights, and cultural preservation organizations. Mr. Gere has been a longtime sponsor of amfAR, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. He has received honors from amfAR, Amnesty International, the Harvard AIDS Institute and the Eleanor Roosevelt Center.

At the conclusion of the Marian Anderson Award Announcement, Crawley thanked Governor Rendell and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Rep. Dwight Evans, Mayor John F.

Street and the City of Philadelphia, as well as the Award's other important sponsors, including American Airlines, the Official Airline of the Marian Anderson Award; Sofitel Philadelphia, the Official Hotel of the Marian Anderson Award; and the Award's broadcast sponsor for the fourth year, WPVI TV-6 ABC. "As you know this is a big event, so you can expect to see this extraordinary Gala performance on WPVI".

Crawley also thanked Jeff Gordon and PECO, most particularly, for sponsoring the Gala Dinner again this year. "PECO, is an important contributor to our success. We are delighted to have them with us again helping us to bring this extraordinary event to the public." PECO president Denis O'Brien remarked, "We're very pleased to support an event which provides scholarship support to talented young artists and showcases distinguished individuals like Richard Gere, who are exceptional role models for young people. Crawley concluded her thanks with an expression of gratitude to the Award object sponsor J.E. Caldwell & Co., and Kelly Boyd of KB Consultants.

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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 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.

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 \$450,000 in free public programs, residencies, commissions, and grants to young artists.

This year's Gala Performance, the details of which will be announced in August, will be preceded by the annual black-tie Gala Dinner, also at the Kimmel Center, which is a fundraiser for the Marian Anderson Award 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 twentieth 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; 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.

