MAYOR SHARPE JAMES TO RECEIVE THE
2002 LOCAL ARTS LEADERSHIP AWARD

Washington, DC —June 17, 2002— Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors have selected Newark Mayor Sharpe James to receive the 2002 Local Arts Leadership Award. The award, given for the sixth consecutive year, honors a public official who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the advancement of the arts locally. The award will be presented at the Mayors Arts Luncheon on Monday, June 17 as part of the Conference of Mayor’s 70th annual meeting in Madison, WI.

“Mayor Sharpe James’ unabashed commitment to the arts proves that the health and vibrancy of a community correlates directly with its investment in the arts and cultural,” said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO, Americans for the Arts.

“Mayor James’ vision of the arts in his community can serve as a model for other mayors across the country,” said J. Thomas Cochran, Executive Director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Mayor James’ dynamic stewardship has been a driving force for the new vibrancy of Newark’s cultural and economic life. With determination, Mayor Sharpe James propelled the building of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), the sixth largest performing arts center in the country with the fourth largest arts education program.

“Arts education is an essential part of the public school curriculum and can provide just the vehicle for an inner city youngster to rise above the temptations of urban life and succeed in a competitive global environment,” stated Mayor Sharpe James.

Since NJPAC opened in 1997, over 2.2 million people, including 500,000 children, have visited the 12-acre, $185 million, 2,700 seat complex. With James’ leadership, the impact of the arts has helped Newark win national recognition for livability and provided a cultural outlet for the 4.5 million people living around the Newark area.

In addition, Mayor James helped raise $20 million for the expansion of The Newark Museum. This world-class institution houses the largest collection of Tibetan art and artifacts in the Western world, a planetarium, and a significant American Art collection.

-more-
Elected in 1986, Mayor James has been a leading champion of local artists and smaller Newark-based arts organizations by supporting their efforts and encouraging Newark’s Division of Recreation and Cultural Affairs and other larger organizations to promote and provide venues for local talents. The growth of these organizations during his tenure in office led to the formation of the Newark Arts Council, a nonprofit oversight and advocacy panel, which represents individual artists and smaller groups, as well as the larger arts organizations.


Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With offices in Washington, DC, and New York City, it has a 40-year record of objective arts industry research. 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.

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.

Contact: Virginia Anagnos
Goodman Media for Americans for the Arts
212.576.2700 ext. 222

Lina Garcia
U.S. Conference of Mayors
202.861.6719