



**CHICAGO MAYOR RICHARD DALEY, ARKANSAS GOVERNOR
MIKE HUCKABEE, MERIDIAN (MS) MAYOR JOHN ROBERT SMITH,
AND LEGENDARY MUSICIAN PETER YARROW
RECEIVE 2005 PUBLIC LEADERSHIP IN THE ARTS AWARDS**

Washington, DC —January 18, 2005 —Americans for the Arts and The U.S. Conference of Mayors today presented Public Leadership in the Arts Awards for 2005 to **Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, Meridian (MS) Mayor John Robert Smith**, and legendary musician **Peter Yarrow**. The awards honor elected officials and artists who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in advancement of the arts.

The awards were presented at the Mayors Arts Luncheon today as part of the Conference of Mayors' 73rd annual winter meeting in Washington, DC. The awards are part of a series of Public Leadership in the Arts Awards given annually by Americans for the Arts and The U.S. Conference of Mayors since 1997.

"These four honorees are at the cutting edge of promoting the arts and using them as a springboard to improve the lives of Americans of all ages," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "Mayor Daley, Governor Huckabee, and Mayor Smith have demonstrated how to build public and private support for the arts in the communities they serve. And Peter Yarrow, throughout his illustrious career, has shown us how the arts can be used to educate young people while helping to build their character. Taken together, our four honorees are proving that strong arts programs are integral to making better American communities and citizens."

"We honor these visionaries who have not only touched, but more importantly, changed the lives of many through their support of the arts. Their contributions to our nation's communities, particularly our children, are invaluable," said Akron, OH Mayor and Conference President Donald L. Plusquellic.

Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley received the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for his unwavering support for arts programs in Chicago since taking office in 1989. For Mayor Daley, the arts are a personal crusade. When the Cultural Affairs Commission needed a home, he called for the restoration of a beautiful old library where now, in addition to offices, daily events are open to the public in a rotating exhibition and performance center. His leadership in presenting the "Parade of Cows" sculptures led to numerous other cities replicating the same concept. Most recently, Mayor Daley spearheaded the creation of Millennium Park, a \$450 million cultural mega-project in the heart of Chicago. First planned in 1997 as a way to create new parkland in Grant Park and transform an eyesore of railroad tracks and parking lots, it has evolved into one of the most significant millennium projects in the world. The 24.5-acre Millennium Park is an

unprecedented cultural playground that features world-class art, music, architecture and landscape design, interactive public art, ice skating, and free classical music presentations. Chicago now has user-friendly fountains, sculptures, and skating rinks that children and tourists can visit day and night for free.

Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee received the **2005 National Award for State Arts Leadership** in recognition of the work that he has done to create opportunities for grade school children to participate in the arts across the state. Governor Huckabee passed a bill that requires every public elementary school in the state to provide at least 40 minutes of instruction in music or visual art every week. Beginning in June 2005, instruction increases to one hour a week for elementary schools, and participating teachers must be certified to teach art and music. As recently appointed chair of the Education Commission of the States, he took a dramatic step by raising arts education to the forefront of his agenda and launched a first-ever national initiative, "The Arts: A Lifetime of Learning," which will be the centerpiece of his two-year leadership term. Because of his love of music, the Governor formed a rock band with a few staff members. Due to their success, they were asked to play for an event at his political party's national convention in 2004 and during this year's Presidential Inaugural activities in Washington, DC.

Meridian (MS) Mayor John Robert Smith received the **2005 National Award for Local Arts Leadership**. Mayor Smith was recognized for being an arts leader throughout his city and state since first taking office in 1993. He has promoted city, county, state, and federal fundraising and public/private support for Mississippi State University's Riley Education and Performing Arts Center, a \$31 million project to restore the Grand Opera House of Mississippi and develop an arts education and conference center in historic downtown Meridian. He was instrumental in the selection of Meridian's Bonita Lakes as the site of a \$50 million-plus Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Center. The Mayor also promoted development and construction of a downtown Arts District parking garage to support the Riley Education and Performing Arts Center and other downtown arts venues. Mayor Smith not only serves on the board of the Grand Theatre in Meridian but has also taken leading roles in several productions including in: *A Christmas Carol*, *Camelot*, and *My Fair Lady*.

Renowned musician **Peter Yarrow**, known throughout the world as an individual performer and as a member of the folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary, received the **2005 Legendary Artist Award**, which recognizes artists who use their talent and public persona to raise awareness for causes that benefit the public good. A member of the legendary trio, Peter, Paul and Mary, now forty-five years in existence, Yarrow remains a performer and activist, roughly in equal parts. Yarrow is a recipient of numerous Grammy Awards, an Emmy, and is a folk artist who is universally recognized for using his prominence to promote positive civic change and to inspire society's commitment to advancing the arts. He has composed a number of anthems of conscience for Peter, Paul & Mary including: "Puff, the Magic Dragon", "Light One Candle", and "Day Is Done". In 1999, he organized a "Sing Along For The Arts" on the Capital steps, which included some 20 members of the House and Senate joining Peter in song, thereby bringing attention to the importance of saving the National Endowment for the Arts. Peter's most ambitious undertaking to date, the aforementioned Operation Respect, offers a free, classroom-based program called "Don't Laugh At Me" and is based on his passionate belief that music, with its power to build community and catalyze change, can be a powerful source of inspiration for children to grow into caring, tolerant and peace-seeking adults. The song, "Don't Laugh at Me," written by Steve Seskin and Alan Shamblin, has become the anthem for a growing national

movement to assure children safe, ridicule-free, and respectful environments in which they can grow and learn to their full potential.

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 record of more than 40 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.

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.

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