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WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS DOUGLAS H. WHEELER WITH 2022 AMBASSADOR OF THE ARTS AWARD

As the second president of Washington Performing Arts, Wheeler expanded the organization's reach through community-focused events, diverse programming, and mentorship of young artists. Now, he serves as an invaluable advisor and artistic visionary who has left an indelible impact on the D.C. community.

(Washington, D.C.) Washington Performing Arts announced today that Douglas H. Wheeler, President Emeritus and advisor, is the recipient of the organization's 2022 Ambassador of the Arts Award. Lauded as a visionary in the arts, Wheeler's invaluable guidance and unwavering commitment to the Washington Performing Arts motto, "Everybody in, nobody out," left an unparalleled legacy on the organization, and the D.C. community. Wheeler is the 10th recipient of the Ambassador of the Arts Award, which recognizes extraordinary achievement, service, and advocacy in the performing arts.

"Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg described Doug Wheeler as 'Impresario Supreme,' and indeed, Doug has long been ours, at Washington Performing Arts," **said Washington Performing Arts President and CEO Jenny Bilfield.** "A champion of the arts, of artists, of audiences, professionals in our field, and of our youngest learners, Doug created the gold standard of an inclusive, impactful arts organization: rooted in excellence and in service to community.

"As a taste maker and creative visionary for our field, Doug's programming launched so many artists over the years," **Bilfield continued** "As a mentor, he's guided young arts management professionals in their career paths, and artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Midori, Liz Lerman, Kathleen Battle, and Wynton Marsalis at crucial inflection points in their lives and work. We are thrilled to honor our dear friend, with this award."

In a 2016 video tribute to Wheeler, **Wynton Marsalis**, who met Wheeler in his early 20s, remarked, "When you're talking about Doug Wheeler you're talking about the zenith of citizenship, of presenting. He's created such a revolution around education and community, being a man of such elegance and ease, and above all, integrity."

Patrick Hayes, Washington Performing Arts's inaugural president, hired and mentored Wheeler as a

young concert booker, instilling in him the values of the organization and its “Everybody in, nobody out” ethos. Wheeler expanded upon these teachings during his time as president.

In 1971, Wheeler launched the Joseph and Goldie Feder Memorial String Competition, awarding lessons and scholarships to promising young musicians. In 1991, Wheeler and Washington Performing Arts established the Men and Women of the Gospel Choir. The Children of the Gospel Choir followed in 1993 and celebrates their 30th anniversary in 2023. Wheeler also initiated the Washington Performing Arts Embassy Adoption Program, Concerts In Schools partnerships with DC Public Schools, and teaching artist programs.

Past honorees of the Washington Performing Arts Ambassador of the Arts Award include operatic bass Soloman Howard (2021); violinist, educator, and humanitarian Midori (2020); flutist and educator Sir James Galway (2019); educator and historian Lonnie G. Bunch III (2018); mezzo-soprano and educator Denyce Graves (2017); business leader and philanthropist Jacqueline Badger Mars (2016); Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (2015); pianist, conductor, and educator Leon Fleisher (2014); and soprano Jessye Norman (2013).

Photographs: Select images from Sunday’s Washington Performing Arts 2022 Ambassador of the Arts event are available from amanda@bucklesweet.com.

ABOUT DOUG WHEELER

Douglas H. Wheeler has worked in the field of arts administration since 1964, and directed the extensive programs of Washington Performing Arts (formerly Washington Performing Arts Society) as President from 1982 to 2002. Upon his retirement on September 1, 2002, he became President Emeritus.

Mr. Wheeler is a Past President of the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) Foundation and past board member of the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington. He has served on and chaired panels for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

An active participant in regional public affairs, Mr. Wheeler is a Past Chairman of the D.C. Chamber of Commerce and was the 1996 Chair of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Chambers. He was a Co-Chair of the District’s Downtown Arts Committee and has served on the Board of Directors of Leadership Washington, the Friday Morning Music Club, and the Community and Friends Board of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. In addition, he is a trustee emeritus of the Federal City Council, and serves on the Advisory Committee of the Dallas M. Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts. From 2003 to 2007, Mr. Wheeler served on the board of directors of Southeastern University. He is currently on the Board of Directors of Partners in Performance, created by violinist Midori to promote the appreciation of chamber music in small communities. In 2004, he was invited by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg to be Chair of the Friends of Music at the Supreme Court.

In April 1996, Mr. Wheeler was invested with the insignia of the Commander’s Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit. He was named a 1994 Washingtonian of the Year in recognition of his efforts in helping to “make the city a better place to live.” In 1985, he was awarded the rank of Chevalier in France’s Order of Arts and Letters.

Mr. Wheeler received a Master of Arts degree in economics from the American University, and prior to joining Washington Performing Arts, held positions with the Hayes Concert Bureau, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, the artist management firm of Judson, O’Neill, Beal & Steinway, and the Cleveland Orchestra.

ABOUT WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for more than half a century with artists, audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: for decades, in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we have presented a tremendous range of artists and art forms, from the most distinguished symphony orchestras to both renowned and emerging artists in classical music, jazz, international genres, and more. We also have an ever-expanding artistic and educational presence on the internet, envisioning ongoing opportunities for online connection and community.

Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts institutions. Through events online and in myriad performance venues and neighborhoods, we engage international visiting artists in community programs and introduce local artists to wider audiences. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through residencies and education programs.

Our achievements have been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with three Mayor’s Arts Awards from the DC Government. We have now embarked upon our second half-century, ever inspired by the motto of our founder, Patrick Hayes: “Everybody in, nobody out.”

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