



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Christine Reimert / 610-639-2136 / creimert@devineandpartners.com
Brianna Taylor / 215-568-2525 / btaylor@devineandpartners.com

THE MANN'S PHILADELPHIA FREEDOM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH WITH "TASTE OF FREEDOM" AWARDS

Local African-American Women Honored for their Distinguished Contributions to their Professions and Communities

PHILADELPHIA (March 28, 2014) – Today, the Mann hosted the Philadelphia Freedom Festival Luncheon "Taste of Freedom" Awards at the Union League of Philadelphia to honor local African-American women for their outstanding contributions to their communities and professions. Like Philadelphia's early civil right hero Octavius V. Catto, to whom the Festival is dedicated, each of these women is a pioneer in her field and has made great contributions to this city.

"The Mann is honored to celebrate these accomplished women," said Catherine M. Cahill, President and CEO of the Mann. "In recognition of Women's History Month and the Philadelphia Freedom Festival, we are pleased to shine a bright light on the impact that these women have made and continue to make in Philadelphia and beyond."

Awardees represent a wide variety of professions including the performing arts, government, business, literature, and medicine. The program is a fundraising event to benefit the Mann's educational programs. During the luncheon guests also enjoyed a performance by CAPA's concert choir.

Awardees:

Performing Arts: **Joan Myers Brown**, Founder of The Philadelphia Dance Company (PHILADANCO) and the Philadelphia School of Dance Arts
Presented by Lisa Nutter

Government: **Hon. Augusta Clark**, Retired City Council (awarded posthumously)
Presented by Hon. Marian B. Tasco

Media: **Trudy Haynes**, Retired CBS Broadcast Pioneer
Presented by Marciarose Shestack

Literature: **Sonia Sanchez**, Poet, playwright, educator, activist
Presented by Lorene Cary

Business: **Beverly A. Harper**, Founder/President of Portfolio Associates
Presented by Hon. Blondell Reynolds Brown

Medicine: **Dr. Edith Mitchell**, Professor of Medicine & Medical Oncology at Thomas Jefferson University, distinguished researcher for pancreatic cancer.
Presented by Lorina Marshall-Blake

Tourism **Wanda Paul**, Senior VP of Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau
Presented by Meryl Levitz

Education: **Jacquelyn Kelley**, CEO of Discovery Charter School
Presented by Hon. Jannie Blackwell

Senator Roxanne Jones Award: **Lucinda Hudson**, President Parkside Association
Presented by Catherine Cahill

About the Mann's Philadelphia Freedom Festival

From February through July, the Mann is presenting an imaginative series of original, artistic programming linking the arts with civil rights history, commemorating the life and legacy of Octavius V. Catto, a 19th-century Philadelphian and African-American civil rights pioneer. The Philadelphia Freedom Festival is under the direction of Nolan Williams, Jr., one of the country's foremost producers of inspirational arts programming, and Rhoda Blount, Project Director for the Festival and Vice President of Education and Community Outreach for the Mann. Supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage and The Presser Foundation, with additional support from The Lomax Family Foundation, the Philadelphia Freedom Festival features collaboration with partners from cultural, educational, and ecumenical institutions to provide programs and activities inspired by the rich diversity of Catto's life. Program partners include The Philadelphia Orchestra, the African American Museum of Philadelphia, Art Sanctuary, the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Curtis Institute of Music, History Making Productions, Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, Temple University Press, The Union League of Philadelphia, 900-AM WURD with additional support from the Mayor's Office of Faith Based Initiatives. For information on Philadelphia Freedom Festival events, please visit www.manncenter.org/philadelphia-freedom-festival.

About Octavius V. Catto

Octavius V. Catto, Philadelphia's 19th-century African-American civil rights pioneer, made a lasting impact on civil rights in Philadelphia and the nation. Born in Charleston, SC in 1839, Catto later settled in Philadelphia with his family in 1850. A well-educated man with a dedication to learning, he graduated valedictorian from what is now known as Cheyney University. Catto was insistent on the equality of all men and became a leader of local and national prominence for enfranchisement and civil rights for African Americans. He worked alongside other black leaders, including Frederick Douglas, to fight for equality. On election day, October 10, 1871, Catto was murdered on his doorsteps for his efforts. Catto remains an important figure in early civil rights history for both the region and the nation.

About the Mann

The Mann Center for the Performing Arts' Education & Community Engagement Program is the region's largest free education program, impacting more than 50,000 young people annually and more than 400,000 since 1997. The Mann's Connecting Arts-N-Schools program offers city-wide schools a wide array of multicultural performances in music, theater and dance. This gives thousands of students the opportunity to experience the sights, sounds and rhythms of live performances – often for the very first time.

As one of the most important outdoor music centers in the country, the Mann Center for the Performing Arts presents top artists in a world-class, entertainment destination in association with AEG Live and Princeton Entertainment. Each summer season, renowned symphony orchestras, iconic rock stars and the latest touring artists in indie rock, hip hop, R&B and pop take the stage here, and today's success is a nod to the venue's storied history. The Mann has been the summer home of The Philadelphia Orchestra since the 1930s and presented critically acclaimed performers in every decade since then. Located in the heart of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, the Mann hosts more than 170,000 visitors annually. Signature concert experiences are surrounded by Philadelphia's stunning nighttime skyline and include seats beneath the Mann's magnificent shed; picnics, blankets and music under the stars on its famous lawn; and dining in Crescendo, the venue's spectacular tented restaurant. For more information, visit www.manncenter.org.