



## *National Portrait Gallery*

Nov. 16, 2015

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### **Inaugural American Portrait Gala Raises \$1.74 Million To Benefit the National Portrait Gallery's Exhibitions**

***500 Guests Attended the Museum's First-ever "Portrait of a Nation" Prize Ceremony***



Left: Congressman John Lewis, Lee Daniels, Hank Aaron, Carolina Herrera, Corporal Kyle Carpenter, Maya Lin, Kim Sajet, David Adjaye, and General Joseph Dunford. Right: Honoree Aretha Franklin performing at the American Portrait Gala. Images Courtesy of Angela Pham/BFA.com.

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery held its inaugural American Portrait Gala Sunday, Nov. 15, raising more than \$1.74 million which will directly benefit the museum's exhibition programming. The event honored Major League Baseball Hall of Famer **Henry "Hank" Aaron**, U.S. Marine and Medal of Honor recipient **Cpl. Kyle Carpenter**, singer and musician **Aretha Franklin**, fashion designer **Carolina Herrera** and designer and artist **Maya Lin**, all of whose portraits are in the museum's collection. The honorees were awarded the Portrait of a Nation Prize for their exemplary accomplishments in the arts, business, entertainment, military service, sports and their commitments to service.

The evening began with a cocktail hour and dinner in the museum's Kogod Courtyard beneath the acclaimed Foster+Partners undulating glass-roof canopy, a signature element of the renovated National Historic Landmark building shared by the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian

American Art Museum. During dinner, guests enjoyed the presentation of the “Portrait of a Nation” Prize: actor/filmmaker **Lee Daniels** presented to Herrera, **Gen. Joseph Dunford** to Carpenter, **Congressman John Lewis** to Aaron, former **Attorney General Eric Holder** to Franklin and architect **David Adjaye** to Lin. The evening culminated with dessert and a musical performance by Franklin, who performed several hits, including “RESPECT,” “Freedom,” and “Chain of Fools.”

The American Portrait Gala’s founding chairs are Wayne and Catherine Reynolds. Co-chairs are the museum’s chairman, Steve Hamp, and his wife Sheila Hamp; Robert and Arlene Kogod; David and Alice Rubenstein; and the Ambassador of France to the United States Gérard Araud.

“I am very grateful for the support of the gala chairs and honored that so many people supported our inaugural effort to raise funds for exhibitions,” said Kim Sajet, director of the museum. “Tonight we honored five people for their exemplary values of bravery, tenacity, creativity, ingenuity and soul. These are the types of attributes we want to pass on to future generations. And indeed, that is precisely what the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery aims to do through our exhibitions and programs.”

“This occasion celebrates the legacy of the National Portrait Gallery and America’s heritage of individual achievement and accomplishment,” said Catherine Reynolds founding chair of the American Portrait Gala.

“The inaugural American Portrait Gala provides the rising generation with examples of eminent men and women whose achievements and struggles will inspire students as they confront their own challenges and pursue their own dreams,” said Wayne Reynolds, founding chair of the American Portrait Gala.

**500 guests, notable art patrons, politicians and philanthropists attended, including artists/architects** David Adjaye (presenter), Mike McGregor, and Barton Rubenstein; **TV/film personalities** Lee Daniels (presenter), Gwen Ifill and Judy Woodruff (master of ceremonies); **officials/politicians** The Honorable Anthony C. Beilenson, The Honorable Richard Blumenthal, The Honorable Jeannine Smith Clark, General Joseph Dunford (presenter), The Honorable Joseph Gildenhorn, Eric Holder (presenter), The Honorable John Lewis (presenter), Donna and Mack McLarty, Mary V. Mochary, The Honorable Mary Ourisman, Colin Powell, and Justice Sonia Sotomayor; **business leaders, philanthropists, and art world luminaries** Robert B. Barnett and Rita Braver, Wayne and Lea Berman, Mr. and Mrs. J. Kevin Buchi, Donald A. Capoccia, Elizabeth and Richard Dubin, Dr. Alan Fern and Mrs. Lois Fern, Alma Gildenhorn, Nancy Itteilag and Jack Donnelly, Mr. and Mrs. John W. McCarter Jr., The Honorable John Medveckis, Cathy Michael Podell,

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Azita Raji, Lola C. Reinsch, Philip K. Ryan, Roger Sant, Dr. Paul G. Stern, and Joseph Ujobai.

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