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## **STEVEN SPIELBERG TO RECEIVE 2009 LIBERTY MEDAL AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER**

*Award to be presented by President William J. Clinton*

Philadelphia, PA (August 4, 2009) – The National Constitution Center’s 2009 Liberty Medal will be awarded to filmmaker and humanitarian Steven Spielberg for his artistic and personal commitment to the preservation of human rights. Through his award-winning films, Spielberg has presented stories of the struggle and triumph of humanity over tyranny, informing and inspiring millions to better understand the abiding call of liberty. Spielberg has also dedicated himself to gathering and archiving the testimonies of survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust, ensuring future generations will never forget the tragedy of liberty lost. The public Liberty Medal ceremony will take place on Thursday, October 8, 2009, at the National Constitution Center on Independence Mall in Historic Philadelphia.

“The Founding Fathers called upon each of us to serve as active participants in our democracy. Through his work in film and philanthropy, Steven Spielberg has heeded that call by reminding us of the power each of us has to make a difference,” said National Constitution Center President and Chief Executive Officer Linda E. Johnson.

This year’s Liberty Medal will be presented to Spielberg by President William J. Clinton, Chairman of the National Constitution Center, who said, “Continuing in the National Constitution Center’s rich tradition of honoring distinguished leaders who have shown a commitment to change through action, we have once again chosen a highly deserving champion of freedom. I look forward to bestowing this award on my friend Steven Spielberg.”

“It will be a great pleasure for me to receive this award,” said Spielberg. “I am thrilled to be honored by my dear friend, President Clinton, and to be recognized by an organization unprecedented in its devotion to the most relevant and significant document in our nation’s history. It’s truly humbling to be added to the distinguished list of past recipients, a group of men and women whom I admire deeply for their commitment to educating the world about the importance of freedom and the blessings of liberty.”

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## ADD ONE/2009 LIBERTY MEDAL

"As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Liberty Medal, it is fitting that we have chosen a recipient whose work resonates with people of all ages and cultures, encouraging thoughtful recognition of what it means to stand up for freedom," said Governor Edward G. Rendell.

"As America's cradle of freedom, the City of Philadelphia is proud to bestow this honor on one of the world's most recognized humanitarians, whose work has touched the lives of millions and has ensured the important stories of our time live on," said Mayor Michael A. Nutter.

Through his powerful films, including *The Color Purple*, *Empire of the Sun*, *Schindler's List*, *Amistad*, and *Saving Private Ryan*, and his work on the acclaimed HBO series *Band of Brothers*, Spielberg has captured the stories of courageous people in this nation and abroad who have worked, fought, and sacrificed for the gift of freedom.

He established the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, after filming *Schindler's List* in 1994, to chronicle and preserve video and oral histories of survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust. The collection – the largest archive of its kind in the world – now stands at 52,000 videos with 105,000 hours of testimony in 32 languages, representing 56 countries.

In 2006, the Foundation became part of the College of Letters, Arts & Sciences at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where the testimonies are currently being digitized and made available to people across the globe. Changing the name to the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, the University has broadened the institute's mission and made its archival content readily accessible to educators, students, researchers, and scholars on every continent.

Additionally, the Foundation now intends to collect testimony from the survivors and witnesses of other genocides. It is currently in the process of gathering personal histories from survivors of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in partnership with the Rwandan organization IBUKA.

In 1998, Spielberg was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit with Ribbon of the Federal Republic of Germany by President Roman Herzog in recognition of *Schindler's List* and the Shoah Foundation.

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## ADD TWO/2009 LIBERTY MEDAL

The Liberty Medal was established in 1988 by We the People 200 to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, annually honoring men and women of courage and conviction who strive to secure the blessings of liberty to people around the globe. The Liberty Medal was administered by the National Constitution Center for the first time in 2006, when Presidents George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton were honored for their bi-partisan humanitarian efforts on behalf of the victims of the tsunami in Southeast Asia and the hurricanes on the Gulf Coast. The 2007 Liberty Medal was awarded to Bono and DATA, the advocacy organization he co-founded to combat poverty and disease in Africa. Last year's Liberty Medal was awarded to former Soviet leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Mikhail Gorbachev for his courageous role in ending the dangerous, decades-long Cold War and in giving hope and freedom to millions who lived behind the Iron Curtain.

Other past Liberty Medal winners include Nelson Mandela, Shimon Peres, Kofi Annan, and Sandra Day O'Connor. The Medal has also been awarded to organizations, including Doctors Without Borders and CNN International. Six former recipients of the Medal have subsequently won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Ira Lubert, of Independence Capital Partners, has renewed his support for the Liberty Medal ceremony and will sponsor the Liberty Medal Award in 2009. The Liberty Medal is also supported by the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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*EDITOR'S NOTE: A complete list of Liberty Medal winners follows.*

**Past Recipients of the Liberty Medal**

<b>2008</b>	Mikhail Gorbachev, former Soviet leader
<b>2007</b>	Bono and DATA (joint prize)
<b>2006</b>	George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton, former U.S. Presidents (joint prize)
<b>2005</b>	Viktor Yushchenko, President of Ukraine
<b>2004</b>	Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan
<b>2003</b>	Sandra Day O'Connor, Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court
<b>2002</b>	Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State
<b>2001</b>	Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General*
<b>2000</b>	Dr. James Watson and Dr. Francis Crick, co-discoverers of the structure of DNA (joint prize)
<b>1999</b>	Kim Dae Jung, President of South Korea*
<b>1998</b>	Senator George J. Mitchell, Irish peace negotiator
<b>1997</b>	CNN International
<b>1996</b>	King Hussein I of Jordan and Shimon Peres, former Prime Minister of Israel (joint prize)
<b>1995</b>	Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
<b>1994</b>	Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic
<b>1993</b>	F.W. de Klerk, President of South Africa* and Nelson Mandela, President of the African National Congress* (joint prize)
<b>1992</b>	Thurgood Marshall, former Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court
<b>1991</b>	Oscar Arias, President of Costa Rica and Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)* (joint prize)
<b>1990</b>	Jimmy Carter, former U.S. President*
<b>1989</b>	Lech Walesa, founder of Solidarity, Poland

\* Liberty Medal recipients who subsequently won the Nobel Peace Prize