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MIKHAIL GORBACHEV TO RECEIVE 2008 LIBERTY MEDAL AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

Award to be presented by President George H.W. Bush

Philadelphia, PA (June 13, 2008) – The National Constitution Center’s 2008 Liberty Medal will be 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. The public Liberty Medal ceremony will take place on Thursday, September 18, 2008, at the National Constitution Center in Historic Philadelphia, and will set the stage for international commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2009.

Joseph M. Torsella, National Constitution Center President and CEO, made the announcement today, saying “This year’s ceremony will be a memorable tribute to a revolutionary thinker with courage and conviction who believed in the power of liberty and openness. Mikhail Gorbachev is someone who truly changed the course of history, and we are honored to recognize him.”

“During the Cold War, Gorbachev helped replace confrontation with negotiation and established a new climate between East and West,” said Torsella. “He bravely opened the doors of Soviet society to the winds of freedom and change, and he continues to be a voice for an open society today. His vision and strength were central to bringing about a peaceful end to the Cold War, and his remarkable leadership has led to profound and lasting consequences for our nations and for all people who treasure liberty.”

This took both vision and courage. As Mikhail Gorbachev said in his Nobel Lecture, “Steering a peaceful course is not easy in a country where generation after generation of people were led to believe that those who have power or force could throw those who dissent or disagree out of

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politics or even in jail. For centuries all the country's problems used to be finally resolved by violent means. I will never agree to having our society split once again into Reds and Whites, into those who claim to speak and act "on behalf of the people" and those who are "enemies of the people."

Fittingly, the Liberty Medal will be presented to Gorbachev by President George H.W. Bush, Chairman of the National Constitution Center. While serving as President of the U.S., Bush's friendship and political alliance with Gorbachev enabled the world's two superpowers to peacefully end their decades-long rivalry. In fact, Gorbachev trusted and valued their friendship so much that, as the Soviet flag was being lowered for the final time at the Kremlin, the person he called was President Bush. Their partnership is symbolic of the way in which Gorbachev has transcended old animosities to spread the blessings of liberty.

President George H.W. Bush said in a statement that he and the Center's Board of Trustees are proud to pay tribute to this year's recipient. "It is a true honor for me to participate in this year's Liberty Medal ceremony to celebrate the achievements of someone whom I consider a great world leader and a dear friend. Regardless of the dividing lines between us, President Gorbachev opened up new possibilities for the world to come together and solve its problems in the pursuit of liberty. When Eastern Europeans were living in the dark shadow of the Cold War, he provided a beacon of light. Now, almost twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, we are still witnessing the positive impact his efforts have had across the globe. President Gorbachev is always looking ahead at a better future and helping all of us work to get there."

"Mikhail Gorbachev came of age when Russia was ruled by a totalitarian regime, but his thinking as a political leader broke free of this repressive straight-jacket," said Mayor Michael A. Nutter. "Caring about the freedom and prosperity of his people, he negotiated the end of the costly and dangerous Cold War and oversaw the demise of the very political system that brought him to power. He was a true agent of change on the global stage."

After becoming the youngest full member of the Politburo in 1980, Gorbachev was named General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1985, ready to make long overdue reforms in the

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Soviet system. For six years he pressed for democratization by promoting *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring). These policies gave a voice to the people of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, resulting in an unprecedented extension of the freedoms of assembly, speech, and travel, as well as religious freedom. In 1988, Gorbachev announced that the

Soviet Union would abandon the Brezhnev Doctrine and allow the Eastern bloc nations to determine their own internal affairs. Gorbachev's refusal to intervene militarily in Eastern European affairs gave hope to those struggling to end four decades of Soviet control. Ultimately, his policies created the environment which led to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November of 1989. Gorbachev was elected as the first executive President of the Soviet Union in 1990. He was, wrote Lance Morrow in *TIME*, "a visionary enacting a range of complex and sometimes contradictory roles," bringing the East closer to the West, acknowledging the power of the free market and religious expression, while managing a recalcitrant party establishment and attempting to revive a stagnant economy. The reforms he initiated had global implications, dramatically reducing East-West tensions and transforming geo-politics.

Gorbachev was also a tireless advocate for the abolition of nuclear weapons, which led to the first major reduction of U.S. and Soviet weapons stockpiles. Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990. In a move unprecedented in Soviet history, Gorbachev voluntarily resigned as leader of the Soviet Union in 1991. At that time, he told President Bush that he wished to remain in public life to encourage "new thinking to prevail in world politics." Keeping in line with this goal, he launched Green Cross International, a non-profit organization that focuses on global ecological law. Gorbachev fervently crusades for clean air and water, and against toxic wastes and chemical weapons, in addition to working with businesses, industry, and governments to make sustainable environmental policy a top global priority. He also serves as President of the Gorbachev Foundation, which conducts political and economic research, and promotes international exchange.

Established in 1988 by We the People 200 to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the Liberty Medal annually honors men and women of courage and conviction who strive to secure the blessings of liberty to people the world over. The Liberty Medal was

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administered by the National Constitution Center for the first time in 2006, when Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill 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. Last year's Liberty Medal was awarded to Bono and DATA, the advocacy organization he co-founded to combat poverty and disease in Africa.

"Two of the twenty Liberty Medal recipients were significantly influenced by Gorbachev," added Torsella. "Lech Walesa and Václav Havel could not have become presidents of their countries if Gorbachev had not paved the way by abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine. His refusal to interfere in the domestic politics of Eastern Europe allowed for these great men to triumph in their pursuits of liberty."

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.

Details about the 2008 Liberty Medal ceremony at the National Constitution Center will be released at a later date and made available online at www.constitutioncenter.org/libertymedal. In keeping with tradition, a limited number of tickets to the ceremony will be made available to the public for free on a first come, first served basis.

The Liberty Medal ceremony will be broadcast live on CBS 3 on Thursday, September 18 at 7:00 p.m. The CW Philly 57 will rebroadcast the ceremony that same evening at 10:00 p.m. CBS 3 (KYW-TV) and The CW Philly 57 (WPSG-TV) are part of CBS Television Stations, a division of CBS Corporation.

Ira Lubert and Independence Capital Partners have renewed their support for the Liberty Medal ceremony and will co-sponsor the Liberty Medal Award in 2008. The Liberty Medal is also generously supported by the Hamilton Family Foundation. Citizens Bank is the presenting

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sponsor for the President's Reception prior to the Liberty Medal ceremony. This is the third consecutive year that Citizens Bank has partnered with the Center for the Liberty Medal.

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.

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



Past Recipients of the Liberty Medal

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

* Liberty Medal recipients who subsequently won the Nobel Peace Prize