



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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03/31/2009

Rep. John Lewis Receives 2009 Congressional Arts Leadership Award

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Americans for the Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, in conjunction with the United States Conference of Mayors, the national organization representing mayors’ and cities’ interests, today presented the 2009 National Award for Congressional Arts Leadership to Representative John Lewis (D-GA). The award, which recognizes distinguished service on behalf of the arts, was presented at the 2009 Congressional Arts Breakfast on Capitol Hill. The breakfast, organized jointly with the Congressional Arts Caucus, kicks off Arts Advocacy Day.

Rep. Lewis was selected for the Congressional Arts Leadership Award for his life-long commitment to the arts. A civil rights icon, Rep. Lewis is fond of saying “without the arts, the civil rights movement would have been like a bird without wings.” Lewis is awarded this honor for his tireless efforts on behalf of a touchstone piece of legislation that he introduced in the House of Representatives—HR. 1126, The Artist-Museum Partnership Act. This legislation would allow artists to claim a fair-market value tax deduction when donating their work to nonprofit institutions, preserving works of local, regional and national significance for the public to enjoy.

“Representative Lewis has demonstrated great leadership and support for the arts for all Americans,” said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. “His passion and perseverance for the arts is inspiring and we are truly grateful for his hard work over the years.”

The National Award for Congressional Arts Leadership is part of a series of Public Leadership in the Arts Awards given annually by Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors since 1997.

“Each year, we recognize a Congressional leader for his or her support of the arts,” said Tom

Cochran, CEO and executive director of The U.S. Conference of Mayors. "Rep. Lewis truly deserves this award for his tireless work on placing the arts high on our national agenda."

Previous recipients of the National Award for Congressional Arts Leadership include Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont (2008), Rep. Betty McCollum of Minnesota (2007), Rep. Jim Leach of Iowa (2006), Rep. Christopher Shays of Connecticut (2005), Rep. David Obey of Wisconsin (2004), Sen. Thad Cochran of Mississippi (2003), Rep. Steve Horn of California (2002), Rep. Norm Dicks of Washington (2001), Sen. Robert Bennett of Utah and Rep. Nancy Johnson of Connecticut (2000), Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts and Rep. Mike Castle of Delaware (1999), Sen. Slade Gorton of Washington and Rep. Louise Slaughter of New York (1998) and Sen. James Jeffords of Vermont and Rep. Rick Lazio of New York (1997).

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

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