Charles Grodin, Dr. Mae Jemison and Marlo Thomas Receive 38th Annual Common Wealth Awards

2017 Recipients honored for Lasting Contributions to Modern Culture

WILMINGTON, Del., April 29, 2017 – Three renowned achievers honored for their lifetime accomplishments with the 38th Annual Common Wealth Awards of Distinguished Service. The awards recognize individuals who have enriched modern culture through their professional and personal endeavors.

The 2017 Common Wealth Award recipients are:

- Charles Grodin, distinguished commentator and storyteller, for Mass Communications;
- Dr. Mae Jemison, an esteemed engineer, physician and NASA Astronaut, for Science;
- Marlo Thomas, social activist and leading national advocate for St. Jude's Children Hospital, for Public Service.

The honorees were recognized at the Common Wealth Awards ceremony hosted by The PNC Financial Services Group Saturday, April 29, at the Hotel du Pont in Wilmington.

The Common Wealth Awards of Distinguished Service were first presented in 1979 by The Common Wealth Trust which was created under the will of Ralph Hayes, an influential business executive and philanthropist. The awards are now made by The Ralph Hayes Common Wealth Foundation, which is funded by the Common Wealth Trust.

In the 38-year history of the Common Wealth Awards, more than $6 million has been awarded to 198 honorees. The 2017 honorees will each receive an award of $75,000.

"The 2017 Common Wealth Award honorees have shaped our world in meaningful and momentous ways," said Bruce H. Colbourn, market executive for PNC Bank, Delaware. "In recognizing these believers and achievers, we show our esteem for all the ways they have enriched and enlightened our world through their life's work."

Ralph Hayes, creator of the Common Wealth Awards, served on the board of directors of one of PNC's predecessor banks in Delaware from 1935 to 1965. Through the awards, he sought to recognize outstanding achievement in eight disciplines: dramatic arts, literature, science, invention, mass communications, public service, government, and sociology. The awards also are an incentive for individuals to make future contributions to the world community.

For more than three and a half decades, the Common Wealth Awards have recognized heads of state, scientists and inventors, explorers, authors, performing artists and activists. Past winners include 11 Nobel laureates, among them, human rights leader Archbishop Desmond Tutu, statesman Henry Kissinger and

authors Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Toni Morrison. Other high achievers on the Common Wealth Awards roster include former Secretary of State Colin Powell; H.M. Queen Noor of Jordan; dance legend Mikhail Baryshnikov; Hollywood icons Sidney Poitier and Meryl Streep; astronauts John Glenn and Buzz Aldrin; primatologist Jane Goodall; ocean explorer Robert Ballard; television journalists Walter Cronkite, Bob Schieffer and Anderson Cooper; and social activists Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Betty Ford and Christopher Reeves.

Since 2000, PNC has sponsored the annual Common Wealth Awards writing contest for Delaware high school students who are inspired by the honorees. Students are asked to explain which Common Wealth Awards honoree they most want to meet and why. A winning essay is selected for each honoree. In recognition of their achievement, the students and their parents/guardian are invited to attend the Common Wealth Awards Ceremony and a pre-event reception. To date, 58 student winners representing various Delaware high schools have met the high achievers honored by the Common Wealth Awards.

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