Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Ron Chernow, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. To Receive 39th Annual Common Wealth Awards

WILMINGTON, Del., April 15, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Three renowned achievers will be honored for their lifetime accomplishments with the 39th Annual Common Wealth Awards of Distinguished Service. The awards recognize individuals who have enriched modern culture through their professional and personal endeavors.

The 2018 Common Wealth Award recipients are:

- **Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.,** respected statesman and devoted public servant, for Government;
- **Ron Chernow**, one of America's preeminent historic biographers, for Literature;
- **Henry Louis Gates, Jr.**, professor of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, distinguished filmmaker, literary scholar and cultural critic, for Sociology

The honorees will be recognized at the Common Wealth Awards ceremony hosted by The PNC Financial Services Group Saturday, April 14, at the Hotel du Pont in Wilmington.

"This year's 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."

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 made by The Common Wealth Trust.

In the 39-year history of the Common Wealth Awards, more than $6 million has been awarded to 201 honorees. The 2018 honorees will each receive an award of $50,000.

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 almost four 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, 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, 61 student winners representing various Delaware high schools have met the high achievers honored by the Common Wealth Awards.

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