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THE WHITE HOUSE PROJECT ANNOUNCES The 2009 EPIC AWARD WINNERS

Hosted by CNN Anchor and Special Correspondent, Soledad O'Brien

*Special Guests: U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
and Pay Equity Pioneer Lilly Ledbetter*

Honoring Lifetime Achievement Award winner Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye (Ret.), Lifetime Network's Every Woman Counts Campaign, and Actress Rosario Dawson's Voto Latino for their powerful efforts to increase political engagement.

New York, NY (March 23rd, 2009) –Today, The White House Project, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to advance a richly diverse, critical mass of women into leadership positions, announced this year's honorees for the 2009 EPIC Awards. The EPIC Awards, which will be held on **Monday, March 30th at The United Nations** in New York, will pay tribute to innovators in democracy and the media, recognizing their indelible impact on the next generation of women leaders.

Awardees will include:

- [Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye](#) (Ret.), the first woman to serve on New York State's highest court, will accept the Lifetime Achievement Award for her visionary commitment to the courts and the people of New York State.
- **Lifetime Network's [Every Woman Counts Campaign](#)**, will receive an EPIC Award for their pioneering public service campaign dedicated to encouraging women to speak out on the issues they care about most, vote and run for office. [Andrea Wong](#), CEO and President, will accept the award.
- [Voto Latino](#) will receive an EPIC Award for the outstanding impact they have had in the last four years on the next generation of Latinas. Actress [Rosario Dawson](#), Co-Founder and [María Teresa Petersen](#), Executive Director will accept the award.

"We are honored to celebrate the talent, innovation, and leadership of such a diverse group of culture changers," said Marie C. Wilson, President and Founder of The White House Project, whose work was recently featured in a [cover story](#) in The Washington Post Magazine. "Through their extraordinary efforts,

these women stretch the collective imagination, and change perceptions of what it is possible for women to achieve in this world.”

CNN anchor and Special Correspondent [Soledad O'Brien](#) will host the night's festivities; award presenters and special guests include [U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand](#), pay equity pioneer **Lilly Ledbetter**, Academy Award-winning actress [Geena Davis](#) and Atlanta City Council President [Lisa Borders](#). The chairs of the 2009 EPIC Awards are **Deborah Slaner Larkin** and **Geraldine Laybourne**.

Seven years ago, The White House Project created The EPIC (Enhancing Perceptions in Culture) Awards to bring together prominent business, philanthropic, political and entertainment leaders to honor innovators who bring positive images of women's leadership to the American public. Over the years The White House Project has been honored to share the stage with EPIC honorees and presenters including Abigail Disney, Eve Ensler, Melissa Etheridge, Tovah Feldshuh, Julie Foudy, Anita Hill, Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Kathleen Kennedy, Billie Jean King, Sheila Nevins, Indra K. Nooyi, Mariane Pearl, Marjane Satrapi, Jeff Skoll, Julie Taymor, Kathleen Turner, Amber Valletta and Diane von Furstenberg.

The Annual EPIC Awards are honored to have Katten, Muchin Rosenman LLP, Lifetime Networks and Morgan Stanley as our Presidential-level supporters. Other corporate supporters of the evening include: American Express, AverQ, Aetos Capital LLC, Bank of America, Best Buy, Chadick Ellig Executive Search Advisors, Ernst & Young, HBO, McLaughlin Partners, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Temin & Company.

The 2009 EPIC Awards theme is “Add Women, Change History” and will be held at **The United Nations in New York on Monday, March 30 at 6:00 PM**. For additional table and ticket information, please contact Kate Ford at 212.261.4752 or kford@thewhitehouseproject.org.

About the White House Project:

[The White House Project](#), a national, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) organization, works to advance a richly diverse, critical mass of women into leadership positions, up to and including the U.S. Presidency. For more information, please visit www.thewhitehouseproject.org.

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THE 2009 EPIC AWARDS

Bios of Honorees

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER: The Honorable Judith S. Kaye



Hon. Judith S. Kaye, Chief Judge of the State of New York (Ret.), was born in Monticello, NY, in 1938. She received a B.A. from Barnard College in 1958 and was graduated cum laude with an LL.B. from the New York University School of Law in 1962. She was 1 of 10 women in a class of 300.

Judge Kaye was admitted to the New York State Bar in 1963 and began her career at the Manhattan law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell, where she met the late Stephen Rackow Kaye, whom she married in 1964. After leaving Sullivan & Cromwell, Kaye worked for the IBM legal department and then the New York University School of Law, where she served as a part-time assistant to Dean Russell Niles. During this time Kaye gave

birth to and began to raise their three children.

In 1969 Kaye joined the law firm of Olwine, Connelly, Chase, O'Donnell & Weyher, where, in 1975, she became the first woman partner in the firm. While at Olwine, Connelly, Kaye was deeply involved in a variety of activities aimed at the improvement of the legal profession and the administration of justice.

On September 12, 1983, Kaye became the first woman to serve on New York State's highest court when Governor Mario M. Cuomo appointed her Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals. Just ten years later, Judge Kaye would become the first woman to occupy the State Judiciary's highest office when she was appointed Chief Judge by Governor Cuomo on February 22, 1993.

Judge Kaye, the first Chief Judge ever to complete a full 14 year term, was appointed to a second term by Governor Eliot Spitzer in 2007. Her devotion to the courts of the State of New York led her to turn down offers to become a justice of the Supreme Court of the United States as well as our nation's Attorney General, allowing her to serve as our Chief Judge for the past fifteen years, longer than any of her twenty-one predecessors.

Throughout her career Judge Kaye has proven herself to be a strong advocate of innovation in courts, promoting numerous initiatives that have served as models for other states. Under her leadership, New York State was considered a national leader in court reform efforts and in establishing problem-solving courts. Working with the Fund for the City of New York, she helped establish the Center for Court Innovation, a non-profit think tank that although independent of the court system, services the judiciary's research and development arm.

A staunch advocate for civil rights, over her years on the bench Judge Kaye saw countless significant cases through to completion. Kaye was chief judge for the decision in *People v. LaValle*, the case which ruled that the state's death penalty statute was unconstitutional. And on July 6, 2006 Kaye authored a dissent in an appeal of four same-sex marriage disputes in which the majority ruled that the state constitution "does not compel recognition of marriages between members of the same sex." Kaye's dissent pointed out that while New York State has a tradition of upholding equal rights, with this decision, "the court today retreats from that proud tradition."

Called "a legal giant, a visionary leader of the courts, an unmatched intellect, a champion for justice, and a consummate professional," Judge Kaye leaves a proud legacy behind as she retires from the bench. She has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Bar Association Justice Center John Marshall Award; the North American Council on Adoptable Children's Adoption Activist Award; the Justice Management Institute's Ernest C. Friesen Award of Excellence; the American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession's Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award; the National Center for State Courts' William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence; the New York County Lawyers Association's William Nelson Cromwell Award; New York University Law School's Vanderbilt Medal; the Barnard College President's Medal; the Gold Medal of the New York State Bar Association; and the Fordham-Stein Prize.

Judge Kaye has served as Chair of the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children; Founding Member and Honorary Chair, Judges and Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert (JALBCA); Member of the Board of Editors, New York State Bar Journal; and Trustee, The William Nelson Cromwell Foundation. She was the President of the Conference of Chief Justices and Chair of the Board of Directors, National Center for State Courts (2002–03). She is also the author of numerous publications—particularly articles dealing with legal process, state constitutional law, women in law, professional ethics and problem-solving courts.

Since retiring from the bench Kaye has returned to private practice, joining the corporate law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom.

2009 EPIC AWARD WINNER: Andrea Wong, President & CEO, Lifetime Networks



Andrea Wong was named President and CEO, Lifetime Networks, in April 2007. In this role, she oversees all the day-to-day operations for the #1 and #2 women's networks, Lifetime Television and Lifetime Movie Network, along with Lifetime RealWomen and Lifetime Digital, including myLifetime.com, as well as advertising sales, distribution, research, programming, public affairs, marketing, business and legal affairs, and strategic planning and operations.

One of the television industry's youngest CEOs, in just over a

year, her creative and business acumen have revitalized and re-energized the most powerful women's media brand across all platforms. As President and CEO, Wong has transformed the company in every way, expanding and contemporizing Lifetime and Lifetime Movie Network programming, re-launching my Lifetime.com, making its first-ever digital acquisitions (ParentsClick Network and Roiworld.com), creating Lifetime Game Studios Korea and implementing a comprehensive re-branding campaign while bringing the company's total revenues to record levels. Her efforts to establish Lifetime as a home for women and men to bring their passion projects has already paid off with record-breaking ratings and demos.

Prior to joining Lifetime, Wong served as Executive Vice President, Alternative Programming, Specials and Late-Night, ABC Entertainment, since May 2004. She joined ABC in August 1993 as a Researcher for ABCNews' PrimeTime Live. In September 1997, she was promoted to Vice President and Executive Assistant to the President, ABC, Inc. By 1998, she was appointed Vice President, Alternative Series and Specials, ABC Entertainment, and in 2000 was promoted to Senior Vice President.

Wong graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering. She holds an MBA from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

Wong recently received The Media Institute's prestigious American Horizon Award for Lifetime's commitment to advocating on behalf of millions of women on issues that matter most in their lives, including promoting women's health, ending violence, raising breast cancer awareness, and encouraging women to vote, run for office and lead.

2009 EPIC AWARD WINNER: Rosario Dawson, Co-Founder, Voto Latino



Rosario Dawson has garnered praise for her numerous leading roles with today's hottest film actors and directors, making her one of Hollywood's most sought after leading ladies. Dawson gained recognition in 2005 when she received a Satellite Award for her performance as 'Mimi Marquez' in the film RENT. She was honored again in 2007 at the esteemed ShoWest where she received the award for "Supporting Actress of the Year." Dawson was recently awarded the "Best Actress in a Motion Picture" Award at the 2009 NAACP Image Awards for her performance in Seven

Pounds and the "Half-Life" Award at the 2008 Cine Vegas International Film Festival alongside Don Cheadle, Viggo Mortensen and Sam Rockwell.

Dawson's film credits include Paramount Classics' Sidewalks of New York; the Robert Rodriguez/Frank Miller film noir drama Sin City; the Oliver Stone epic Alexander; Shattered Glass; The Rundown; the acclaimed Spike Lee film The 25th Hour; Men in Black 2; the Adventures of Pluto Nash; and Chelsea Walls, directed by Ethan Hawke. She will appear in upcoming Sin City 2, and can also be seen in the indie films This Girl's Life and Love in the Time of Money.

Dawson made her film debut in the highly acclaimed and controversial hit *Kids*. Directed by photographer Larry Clark, with a script by Harmony Korine, *Kids* depicted 24 hours in the life of a group of New York Skaters and the havoc that runs through it. Dawson's other film credits include: Spike Lee's *He Got Game* opposite Denzel Washington; *Light It Up*, opposite Forrest Whitaker and Vanessa Williams; *Down To You* with Freddie Prinze Jr.; and *Josie and The Pussycats*, with Rachel Leigh Cook and Tara Reid.

Dawson currently resides in Los Angeles. In 2004, she co-founded Voto Latino, an organization that works to promote an enfranchised America by leveraging celebrity voices, the latest technology and youth themselves to promote positive change. In recognition of her work to empower the Latino community, in 2007 Dawson was honored with the esteemed Hispanic Heritage Award for Vision.

2009 EPIC AWARD WINNER: María Teresa Petersen, Executive Director, Voto Latino



Named by Hispanic Magazine as among the top Latinas in Government and Politics, María Teresa Petersen is the founding Executive Director of Voto Latino, a youth organization targeting acculturated Latinos in civic participation. Under María Teresa's leadership, Voto Latino launched the first national mobile texting campaign to register voters in 2006, received various marketing awards for its unique programs including a Webby Award nomination, created the Celebrity Coalition chaired by actor Rosario Dawson, and established media partnerships that include MySpace, iTunes Latino and MTV. During the 2008 presidential elections, Voto Latino's work concentrated in five battle ground states. It witnessed a 5% increase in Latino voter participation in those states above the national average.

In addition to serving as a frequent political commentator on various MSNBC shows including *Hardball* and *Morning Joe*, María Teresa appears on CNN's *AC360*, Fox, Telemundo, and NPR. National conferences including Net Roots Nation, Harvard Law School Charles Hamilton Houston Institute, Prudential, and Tide's Momentum seek her to speak on politics, technology, and Latino issues.

María Teresa started her career as a Legislative Aide for former Democratic Caucus Chairman Vic Fazio managing international trade and appropriations. She is a Women's Media Center fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Public Policy International Affairs fellow, a National Hispana Leadership Institute fellow, and sits on the boards of Latino Leader's Network and Latina PoderPAC. She is a recipient of numerous awards for leadership including the White House Project's EPIC Award, an Imagen Foundation Award, and a Hunt Alternative Fund Prime Mover nominee. María Teresa holds a Masters from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and a Bachelors from University California, Davis in international economics.

HOST: Soledad O'Brien, Anchor and Special Correspondent at CNN



Soledad O'Brien is an anchor and special correspondent for CNN: Special Investigations Unit, reporting hour-long documentaries throughout the year and filing in-depth series on the most important ongoing and breaking news stories for all major CNN programs. She also covers political news as part of CNN's "Best Political Team on Television."

Most recently, O'Brien has reported for CNN Presents: Black in America, a sweeping CNN on-air and digital initiative breaking new ground in revealing the current state of Black America 40 years after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The landmark programming features six hours of documentaries and weekly reports with a focus on fresh analysis from new voices about the real lives behind the stereotypes, statistics and identity politics that frequently frame the national dialogue about Black America.

O'Brien joined CNN in July 2003 as the co-anchor of the network's flagship morning program, American Morning, and distinguished herself by reporting from the scene on the transformational stories that broke on her watch. Her efforts following Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami in Phuket, Thailand, have earned her numerous awards and critical acclaim.

In recent months she anchored and reported a highly acclaimed CNN: Special Investigations Unit documentary featuring a never-before-seen look at Martin Luther King Jr.'s private writings, notes and teachings. She is also focused on her ongoing initiative titled "Children of the Storm," which provides video cameras to young Hurricane Katrina survivors so that they can tell their stories of trial and triumph.

O'Brien came to CNN from NBCNews where she had anchored the network's Weekend Today since July 1999. Before Weekend Today, O'Brien anchored MSNBC's award-winning technology program The Site. O'Brien joined NBC News in 1991 and was based in New York as a field producer for Nightly News and Today. Before her time at NBC, she served three years as a local reporter and bureau chief for the NBC affiliate KRON in San Francisco. She began her career as an associate producer and news writer at the then-NBC affiliate, WBZ-TV in Boston.

In April of this year, O'Brien received the first annual "Soledad O'Brien Freedom's Voice Award" created in her honor by Community Voices at the Morehouse School of Medicine. Her professional accomplishments, commitment to cover stories that others fail to pursue, and her willingness to be a voice for those in society who are unable to speak for themselves inspired the award. In 2007, O'Brien earned a Gracie Allen Award for her reporting from Cyprus on the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict and her reports from the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. The NAACP recognized her humanitarian efforts and journalistic excellence with its President's Award. She was also the recipient of the American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay's 2007 Clara Barton Humanitarian Award.

SPECIAL GUEST: Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand was sworn in as New York's Junior Senator on January 27th, 2009, replacing current Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton. Prior to her appointment to the U.S. Senate, Gillibrand served in the United States House of Representatives representing New York's 20th Congressional District, which spans across ten counties in Upstate New York. Senator Gillibrand serves on the Environment & Public Works Committee; Foreign Relations Committee; Agriculture Committee; and Special Committee on Aging.

As she travels all across New York, from Buffalo to Brooklyn, the top concern among New Yorkers is the economy. That is why her number one priority is creating good-paying jobs in New York.

Prior to serving in Congress, Senator Gillibrand served as Special Counsel to the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Andrew Cuomo, during the administration of President Clinton. At HUD, Gillibrand played a key role in furthering the Labor and New Markets initiatives, working to strengthen enforcement of the Davis-Bacon Act and drafting legislation to build infrastructure aimed at revitalizing lower income areas across the nation. Following federal service, Congresswoman Gillibrand entered the private sector, joining one of the Country's premier law firms in New York City.

Today, Senator Gillibrand lives in Greenport, New York with her husband, Jonathan Gillibrand, and their sons, Theodore, who is 5 years old and Henry who was born in May of 2008. Senator Gillibrand is the sixth woman to have a child while serving as a Member of Congress.

SPECIAL GUEST: Lilly Ledbetter, Pay Equity Pioneer



Lilly Ledbetter served as a manager at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, Alabama for almost twenty years. She received the top performance award and was the only woman selected to initiate the light truck production at the Gadsden Plant. Near the end of her career, she received an anonymous note informing her that she had been consistently paid much less than virtually all of her male coworkers over the years. She sued Goodyear and won a jury verdict of more than \$3 million. But in 2007, in *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.*, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 against Ms. Ledbetter saying that she had waited too long to bring her claim, overturning her original jury award and bringing her case to an end.

Although Ms. Ledbetter saw no monetary awards for her fight against pay discrimination, her case prompted a campaign to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which would ensure that other victims of pay discrimination have more than 180 days after their first

discriminatory paycheck to file a complaint. The 111th Congress passed the bill in early 2009 and President Obama signed it into law on January 29, 2009. Ms. Ledbetter has testified multiple times before Congress and continues to travel across the country as an outspoken advocate for pay equity.

Ms. Ledbetter was born and raised in Jacksonville, Alabama, where she still lives today. She started working immediately after graduating Jacksonville High School, and her career spans more than thirty-five years. Prior to her tenure at Goodyear, Ms. Ledbetter worked as a manager for H&R Block and as an assistant financial aid director at Jacksonville State University, among other roles. She has been married to her husband Charles more than fifty years. They have two children and four grandchildren.

PRESENTER: Geena Davis, Board Member of The White House Project, Actress and Advocate



Academy Award-winner Geena Davis continues to be one of Hollywood's most sought-after actors. Having received the 2006 Golden Globe Awards for Best Performance by Actress in a Television Series – Drama, Davis broke ground in her portrayal of the first female President of the United States in ABC's hit show "Commander in Chief." In 1989, Davis received an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role as the offbeat dog trainer Muriel Pritchett in Lawrence Kasdan's "The Accidental Tourist." She was again nominated for an Academy Award and Golden Globe for her performance as Thelma in Ridley Scott's "Thelma and Louise," in which she co-starred with Susan Sarandon. Davis received Golden Globe nominations for Best Actress for her portrayals of a political speech writer in "Speechless," a film which she also co-produced, and as a baseball phenomenon in "A League of Their Own." Davis made her feature film debut starring opposite Dustin Hoffman in "Tootsie." She then went on to star in such films as "The Fly," "Beetlejuice," "Earth Girls are Easy," "Angie," "The Long Kiss Goodnight," and "Stuart Little."

Davis, a member of the genius society Mensa, is also a trustee of the Women's Sports Foundation, and supports Title IX and girls' participation in sports through her own website, GeenaTakesAim.com. Although she took up the sport in 1997, Davis was one of only 32 women to qualify to compete in the 2000 Olympic Trials for archery. She attained the rank of thirteenth in the nation the next year. A long-time advocate for women and girls, Davis founded the *See Jane* program. *See Jane* is dedicated to advocating balance in gender representation and to increasing the percentages of female characters and reduce stereotyping in media made for children ages 0-11.

PRESENTER: Lisa Borders, Board Member of The White House Project and President of the Atlanta City Council



Lisa Borders serves as President of the Atlanta City Council, having been elected in a citywide special election on August 10, 2004. She was re-elected by an overwhelming margin in 2005's normal citywide election cycle. Her duties include presiding over Council meetings, appointing committee chairs and participants for Council and maintaining relationships with the Executive branch of government. Her community initiatives include increasing the availability of affordable housing, uncovering transportation solutions to address our region's traffic challenges and promoting neighborhood

safety and preservation.

Lisa is also CEO of LMB LLC, a consulting company advising clients on community reinvestment, external affairs, marketing and communications. Previously, Lisa served as a Senior Vice President of Marketing and External Affairs with Cousins Properties Incorporated, an Atlanta-based Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT).

Prior to joining Cousins, Lisa worked in the health care arena for over 15 years. She served as the Chief Administrator for Atlanta Women's Specialists and also served as VP-Operations for Healthcap Atlanta (a Physician Practice Management Company acquired by FPA Medical Management).

Lisa has worked in her community primarily focusing on family issues in the areas of education, healthcare and housing. She serves as a trustee at the Westminster Schools, a board member at Clark Atlanta University, and as a director of Saint Joseph's Healthcare System. She is a member of Leadership Georgia and recruits and interviews students for her alma mater, Duke University, where she also serves on the Board of Visitors. She has recently resigned from the boards of Research Atlanta, the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, Teach For America, Great Schools Atlanta and The Salvation Army in an effort to devote time to the City.

She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Duke University (Durham, NC) and a Masters of Science in Health Administration from the University of Colorado (Denver, CO). She has one son, Garry, who has graduated with honors from Georgia State University.

EVENT CHAIR: Deborah Slaner Larkin, Board Member of The White House Project

Deborah Slaner Larkin is the former executive director of the Women's Sports Foundation. In this capacity, she developed a broad-based advocacy network to increase female

participation and equity in sports, and developed National Girls and Women in Sports Day. Larkin served on the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports from 1994 to 2002, where she chaired a national task force on girls and minorities in sports. She is the author of a national research study titled, "Physical Activity & Sport in the Lives of Girls: physical and mental health dimensions from an interdisciplinary approach. For the past 10 years, she has served as chair of the Westchester Fund for Women and Girls and is a member of the National Coalition of Girls and Women in Education specializing in Title IX equity issues with the National Women's Law Center.

EVENT CHAIR: Geraldine B. Laybourne, Board Member of The White House Project

Geraldine B. Laybourne is the founder, chairman and chief executive officer of Oxygen Media. Founded in 1998 and currently available in over 50 million cable homes, Oxygen puts a fresh spin on television for women, airing more original programming than any other woman's network. Prior to starting Oxygen, Gerry spent 16 years at Nickelodeon – taking over management of the network in 1984. Under her leadership, Nickelodeon became the top-rated 24-hour cable network and won several notable awards including Emmys, Peabodys, Cable Ace, and Parent's Choice awards.

From 1996-1998, Gerry was president of Disney/ABC Cable Networks where she was responsible for overseeing current cable programming for the Walt Disney Company and its ABC subsidiary. Gerry earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History from Vassar College and a Master of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Pennsylvania. She and her husband Kit, a producer, author and animator, have two children and one grandchild.