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Second American Portrait Gala Honors Dr. Madeleine K. Albright, David D. Ho, M.D., Bill T. Jones, Spike Lee and Rita Moreno With Prestigious “Portrait of a Nation” Prize



Award Honorees and Presenters at the 2017 American Portrait Gala at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery: Glenn Ligon, Gerald H. Friedland M.D., Bill T. Jones, David D. Ho M.D., Dr. Madeleine K. Albright, Kim Sajet (Director of National Portrait Gallery), Rita Moreno, Patrick Ewing, Spike Lee, Robert Redford, Andrea Mitchell. Photo by Zach Hilty / BFA

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery held its second American Portrait Gala Sunday, Nov. 19, raising \$1 million in support of the museum’s compelling exhibition programming. The event honored former Secretary of State **Dr. Madeleine K. Albright**; medical doctor and HIV/AIDS researcher **David D. Ho, M.D.**; artistic director, choreographer and dancer **Bill T. Jones**; film director, producer, writer and actor **Spike Lee**; and multi-award-winning actress **Rita Moreno**, all of whom have portraits in the museum’s collection and have made significant contributions to the nation’s shared

history, development and culture. This year's five honorees were awarded **Portrait of a Nation Prizes** for their exemplary accomplishments in fields as diverse as politics and diplomacy, science and arts and entertainment, and for their advocacy of human rights. The portraits of the award recipients will remain on view in the National Portrait Gallery's "Recent Acquisitions" exhibition through Nov. 4, 2018.

More than 400 supporters of the arts arrived in black-tie attire to enjoy the evening's cocktail reception in the Portrait Gallery's Great Hall where President Abraham Lincoln celebrated his second inaugural ball more than a century ago. Guests spanned the industries of arts, culture, sports, business, diplomacy, philanthropy and entertainment. The dinner was hosted in the museum's Robert and Arlene Kogod Courtyard, a signature element of the renovated National Historic Landmark Building shared by the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Under the glass canopy of the acclaimed Foster+Partners-designed courtyard, guests enjoyed the presentation of the "Portrait of a Nation" Prize: **Robert Redford**, award-winning actor, director, producer and environmentalist, presented to Albright; **Gerald H. Friedland, M.D.**, professor of medicine and epidemiology and public health, director emeritus, AIDS Program, School of Medicine, Yale University, to Ho; **Glenn Ligon**, artist, to Jones; **Patrick Ewing**, basketball Hall-of-Famer, to Lee; and **Andrea Mitchell**, NBC News and MSNBC journalist, to Moreno. The evening culminated with a musical performance by four-time Grammy Award-winning artist **Esperanza Spalding**.

The American Portrait Gala's 2017 co-chairs are His Excellency Martin Dahinden, Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States, and Mrs. Anita Dahinden; Robert and Arlene Kogod; and David and Alice Rubenstein. The vice chairs are NETFLIX, Mr. and Mrs. Michael H. Podell, Joseph P. Ujobai and Eduardo Ardiles. The gala's program chairs are Mr. Tommie L. Pegues and Mr. Donald A. Capoccia.

"This year's five honorees, their presenters and the artists who captured their likenesses have greatly impacted American culture," said **Kim Sajet, director of the museum**. "Their achievements are notable for having created a better future through 'true grit'; setting aside short-term gains—they took a long-term approach built on passion and purpose, learning from others, acquiring knowledge, honing skills and staying the course. Moreover, all of this year's honorees symbolize the best of our nation—pioneers, immigrants, women who have broken glass ceilings, innovators, entrepreneurs who created news paths—because traditional doors were closed to them. These are the people we honor and whose portraits we are proud to include in the collection."

"The National Portrait Gallery is a place where visitors come face-to-face with those who built our nation," said **Tommie L. Pegues, program chair**. "This black-tie event benefits the museum's Exhibitions Endowment, meaning that the six to eight special exhibitions presented each year can reach

1.3 million visitors in person and millions more online. The Portrait Gallery receives a percentage of its funds each year through a federal appropriation, but all special exhibitions are funded through private support, making the American Portrait Gala integral to the museum’s mission to present great programs.”

Notable art patrons, politicians and philanthropists who attended include creative influencers Bjorn Amelan, Jesse Frohman (honoree portrait artist), Timothy Greenfield-Sanders (honoree portrait artist), Glenn Ligon (presenter), Barton and Shereen Rubenstein, Esperanza Spalding (performer), Liza Voloshin, and Cleo Wade; **TV/film personalities** Andrea Mitchell (presenter), Mia Moretti, and Sibylle and Robert Redford (presenter); **officials/politicians** The Honorable and Mrs. Stuart Bernstein, His Excellency Martin Dahinden, Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States, and Mrs. Anita Dahinden, The Honorable and Mrs. Joseph B. Gildenhorn, His Excellency Joe Hockey, Ambassador of Australia to the United States, and Ms. Melissa Babbage, Rep. Doris Matsui, The Honorable Mary V. Mochary, His Excellency Pedro Morenés Eulate, Ambassador of Spain to the United States, and His Excellency Kenichirō Sasae, Ambassador of Japan to the United States, and Mrs. Nobuko Sasae; **business leaders, philanthropists, art world luminaries and other notables** José Andrés and Patricia Andrés Fernandez, John and Carol Boochever, Dr. and Mrs. Paul Carter, Kim Cullen, Beth Rudin DeWoody and Firooz Zahedi, Nazgol and Kevin Fearnow, Patrick Ewing (presenter), Gerald H. Friedland, M. D. (presenter), The Honorable and Mrs. Fred V. Malek, Mr. Tommie L. Pegues and Mr. Donald A. Capoccia, Rabbi Amy R. and Gary L. Perlin, Michael H. and Catherine Podell, David Rubenstein, Karla Scherer and Harve Ferrill, Jon Stryker and Slobodan Randjelović, Jeff Trandahl, Joseph P. Ujobai and Eduardo J. Ardiles.

National Portrait Gallery

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery tells the multifaceted story of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Spanning the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists whose lives tell the American story.

The National Portrait Gallery is part of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture at Eighth and F streets N.W., Washington, D.C. Connect with the museum at npg.si.edu, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and the museum’s [blog](#).

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