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Interviews and photographs available.

**BLACK TIE DINNER ANNOUNCES
STELLAR LINEUP FOR NOV. 14 EVENT**

***MARRIAGE EQUALITY PLAINTIFF TO SPEAK;
TREVOR PROJECT, MELISSA GROVE TO RECEIVE HONORS;
TOP-NOTCH ENTERTAINERS WILL IGNITE THE STAGE***

DALLAS (Aug. 6, 2015) – The plaintiff in the historic U.S. Supreme Court marriage equality case will be one of this year’s distinguished guest speaker at the 34th annual Black Tie Dinner, organizers announced this evening. The dinner gala will be held Nov. 14 at the Sheraton Dallas. The theme for this year’s dinner is “IGNITE!”

In June 2013, Jim Obergefell and John Arthur decided to get married to obtain legal federal recognition of their relationship. They married in Maryland. After learning that their state of residence, Ohio, would not recognize their marriage license, they filed a lawsuit, which eventually made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Decided on June 26, 2015, the case required all states to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples and to recognize same-sex marriages validly performed in other jurisdictions. The 5-4 vote legalized same-sex marriage throughout the United States.

“As plaintiff in this historic case, Jim Obergefell will forever be known for standing up to protect the marriage equality of all Americans,” said Black Tie Dinner Co-chair John Lawrimore. “Obergefell is one of so, so many people in our community who ignite passion, ignite community and ignite equality.”

The Black Tie Dinner Board of Directors announced other program highlights, and promised more to come.

Elizabeth Birch Equality Award

The Trevor Project

Founded in 1998 by the creators of the Academy Award-winning short film “Trevor,” The Trevor Project (<http://www.thetrevorproject.org>) is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBT and questioning young people ages 13-24.

The Elizabeth Birch Equality Award is given to individuals, an organization or company that has made a significant contribution of national scope to the LGBT community. Former Human Rights Campaign leader Elizabeth Birch received the first such award, as well as the distinction of having this recognition renamed in her honor. Past recipients of the Birch Award include Showtime Networks/Robert Greenblatt, Alan Cumming, Sharon Stone, Bishop V. Gene Robinson, Judy Shepard, American Airlines, decorated veteran Eric Alva, Chaz Bono and Scouting For All founder Zach Wahls.

Kuchling Humanitarian Award

Melissa Grove, Executive Director, Legacy Counseling Center

Melissa Grove, M.S., LPC has a background in geri-psychiatrics, supported housing and mental health management. She has worked with Legacy since 1992 and has managed Legacy Founders Cottage since its inception in 1996.

Before joining Legacy Counseling Center, she managed a 60-bed psychiatric unit for ADAPT of Texas Inc. Other experience includes working with clients with schizophrenia, emotionally disturbed children, alcoholic Mescalero Indians, adults with retardation, terminally ill elderly and Haitian families. A therapist herself, Grove staffs the 24-hour suicide crisis line for Legacy.

“Melissa Grove has provided what seems like a lifetime of leadership and commitment to Legacy over the years,” Lawrimore said. “From instituting the Founders Cottage to opening new housing programs to putting together the largest conference in the nation for HIV-positive women, Melissa continues to touch people living with HIV/AIDS in unimaginable ways.”

The Kuchling Humanitarian Award, presented each year at Black Tie Dinner, is given to individuals who have made extraordinary gifts of their time and talents on behalf of the LGBT community. The award is named in honor of the late Raymond Kuchling, a leading activist in Dallas’ LGBT community, former manager of economic development for the City of Dallas and an original founder of the organization that became Black Tie Dinner Inc.

Featured Entertainment

The Black Tie Dinner has a 33-year record of presenting stellar acts that keep attendees engaged and entertained. This year is no different.

On Nov. 14, these acts will grace the Black Tie stage:

- **Well Strung.** This New York City-based string quartet derives their unique blend of vocals and strings by fusing classical music with the pop music of today. Members Edmund Bagnell (first violin), Chris Marchant (second violin), Daniel Shevlin (cello) and Trevor Wadleigh (viola) spend their time making new music and touring internationally. And, they're easy on the eyes!
- **Ty Herndon.** This openly gay country star has always been all about the ties that bind. You feel it when he's singing deeply moving No. 1 hits like "What Mattered Most" and "Living in a Moment." You get it just as much when he's goofing around with the audience between songs. Even in a genre that prides itself on relatability, he might be the king of connecting.
- **Betty Who.** This RCA Recording star has described her sound as "taking influences from past music and mixing it in with the emotions I'm actually living through." The Sydney, Australia, native has opened for Katy Perry and Kylie Minogue.
- **Dana Goldberg.** Co-chairs previously announced the return of much-loved comedian Dana Goldberg as 2015 emcee.

About Black Tie Dinner

Black Tie Dinner is a nonprofit organization that raises funds for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) supportive organizations serving North Texas through a premier event of empowerment, education and entertainment in partnership with the community.

Since 1982, the nation's largest LGBT fundraising dinner has grown while the evolution of our community is reflected in the yearly increases that beneficiaries have received. The first dinner produced a \$6,000 donation to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Since then, the dinner has grown to distribute more than \$19.3 million to national and local beneficiaries.

Black Tie Dinner continues to be the most successful dinner in the country supporting the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, and has the distinction of being the only dinner also benefiting local beneficiaries.

The event has headlined local and national celebrities and leaders such as Marlee Matlin, Maya Angelou, Geena Davis, Lily Tomlin, Martin Sheen, Gavin Newsom, Rep. Tammy Baldwin and Oscar-winning screenwriter Dustin Lance Black. In addition to speakers and live entertainment, Black Tie Dinner honors outstanding service to the LGBT community by awards given during the dinner program. In the past 33 years, Black Tie Dinner has proudly honored Elizabeth Birch, Sharon Stone, Judy Shepard, Alan Cumming, Showtime Networks/Robert Greenblatt, Bishop V. Gene Robinson, Cyndi Lauper, Logo Network/Brian Graden, Chely Wright, American Airlines, Chaz Bono, JCPenny and many others with these awards.

For more information about Black Tie Dinner or this year's event, visit blacktie.org or call 972-865-2239, ext. 29.

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