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BLACK TIE DINNER CALLS FOR 2017 **BENEFICIARY APPLICATIONS** **And Announces New First-Year Beneficiary Initiative**

DALLAS (February 7, 2017) – Black Tie Dinner, Inc., is proud to begin its 36th year in partnership with and in support of the North Texas lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community organizations and its national beneficiary, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRCF).

Each year, the Black Tie Dinner Board of Directors selects up to 20 LGBT supportive organizations from the North Texas area through a rigorous review process in order to select worthy organizations to receive funds from that year's charitable dinner event. In its 35-year history, the dinner has distributed more than \$21 million.

Beneficiary applications are now available on the Black Tie Dinner website. To be eligible, candidates must have a tax-exempt status as determined by the IRS, be able to demonstrate significant service to the North Texas LGBT community and must use a majority of these funds for direct programs and services.

Beginning this year, Black Tie Dinner will offer a "First-Year Beneficiary" program allowing new organizations to participate with fewer requirements in their first year (i.e., fewer tables, raffles tickets, auction items to contribute and volunteer hours). In accordance with these decreased requirements, the organization's share of the financial distribution will be proportionally less. This new initiative will give newer organizations an opportunity to get acquainted with the Black Tie family through a one-time designation as a First-Year Beneficiary. After the first year, they will have to apply as a Full Beneficiary. First-Year Beneficiaries will not be in competition with Full Beneficiaries when selection takes place in April. While returning beneficiaries will not be eligible as First-Year Beneficiaries, they will still enjoy all of the benefits they have had in the past with Black Tie Dinner, including a proportionally larger distribution amount in comparison to organizations that apply as First-Year.



“We are excited about the launch of our new First-Year Beneficiary Program, as we feel it will further out outreach into the North Texas Community,” says Nathan Robbins, Black Tie Dinner Co-Chair. “At the end of the day, we want our Dinner to make a major impact on the community, and we hope this brings our reach to newer, up-and-coming organizations that our vital to our success,” adds David Robinson, Black Tie Dinner Co-Chair.

A complete list of qualifications may be found at blacktie.org/Beneficiaries. Beneficiary applications are entirely web-based at blacktie.org and completed applications are due by 5:00 pm on Friday, March 24, 2017. This year’s beneficiaries will be announced on April 24, 2017.

Black Tie Dinner will be held on Saturday, November 11, 2017. For additional information about the Dinner, visit blacktie.org. Questions regarding the beneficiary application process may be emailed to corela@blacktie.org.

About Black Tie Dinner

Black Tie Dinner is a non-profit 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 that has grown into the nation's largest LGBT fundraising dinner since its inception in 1982. The first dinner produced a \$6,000 donation to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, and has since raised over \$21 million for 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 Maya Angelou, Geena Davis, Lily Tomlin, Martin Sheen, Connie Britton and Dustin Lance Black. In addition to live entertainment, Black Tie Dinner honors outstanding service to the LGBT community with the Elizabeth Birch Equality Award, the Black Tie Dinner Media Award and the Kuchling Humanitarian Award. Recipients have included Debra Messing, Connie Britton, Greg Louganis, 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, JCPenney and Scouting For All founder Zach Wahl.

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