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**CONGRESSWOMAN TAMMY BALDWIN TO
PRESENT KEYNOTE AT 2010 BLACK TIE DINNER**

**SINGER/SONGWRITER CHELY WRIGHT RECEIVES BLACK TIE DINNER MEDIA
AWARD**

DALLAS (Aug. 6, 2010) — Black Tie Dinner announced Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, the first out lesbian and the first openly gay non-incumbent elected to Congress, will present the keynote speech at the 29th annual Black Tie Dinner, to be held on Saturday, Nov. 6, 2010, at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel.

The speaker and entertainment lineup were announced on Aug. 5 at Park Place Motorcars Dallas.

Serving Wisconsin's Second District since 1999, Congresswoman Baldwin is co-founder and co-chair of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus, which is dedicated to achieving the full enjoyment of human rights for LGBT people in the United States and around the world. In 2009, she helped lead the successful effort to enact the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Act. She continues to champion a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and the repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

"Congresswoman Baldwin is a true friend inside the Beltway," said Ron Guillard, co-chair of the Dinner. "She is using her influence to move us closer to equal rights for GLBT Americans. She has been an advocate and a role model for many who face obstacles in achieving their dreams."

Congresswoman Baldwin is the author of the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act, which would grant the domestic partners of federal employees the same benefits — and require of them the same obligations — as the spouses of federal employees. She also authored the first comprehensive approach to improving all areas of the health-care system where LGBT Americans face inequality and discrimination. She is currently drafting legislation to address issues affecting older LGBT Americans.

Earlier this year, Congresswoman Baldwin chaired a hearing of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on the Anti-Homosexuality bill in Uganda, and she continues to urge our

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government to assist LGBT refugees who are persecuted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Media Award To Honor Chely Wright

Singer/songwriter Chely Wright will receive the Black Tie Dinner Media Award which is given in recognition of positive, increased awareness of GLBT issues in the media.

Wright became the first prominent country music star to declare publicly that she is gay. On the *Today Show*, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Oprah* and in a *People* magazine cover story, Wright discussed her decision to live openly as a lesbian entertainer in the mainstream country music world. In the interviews she clarifies that it was important to come out - not only for herself - but because she's in a unique position to be able to provide a counter message to the hateful, bigoted messages young children hear from their churches on the issue of sexuality. Wright has recently written a memoir, [Like Me](#), released in May, 2010.

Black Tie Dinner Co-Chair Nan Arnold praised Wright for her courage. "The reaction from her fans and others has been overwhelmingly positive," Arnold said. "Chely's decision to live openly as a lesbian is creating an opportunity for the voices of acceptance and equality to be heard."

Though Wright made her name as a commercial country singer, recording songs from some of Nashville's top writers — including modern-day classics like "Single White Female," "Shut Up and Drive" and "Jezebel" — she has been honing her craft as a songwriter since her teenage years in rural Kansas. Her seventh studio album, *Lifted off the Ground*, was released in May.

Activist, author and businessman Mitchell Gold will present the Black Tie Dinner Media Award to Wright. Gold, who plays a major role in the national dialogue on gay rights, is the founder of Faith in America, a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating people about how religion-based bigotry is used to justify discrimination against gay people. He has also authored [Crisis: 40 Stories Revealing the Personal, Social, and Religious Pain and Trauma of Growing Up Gay in America](#), as well as books on home furnishings. He is the openly gay Chair-man and co-founder of the innovative home furnishings design, manufacturing, and retailing company Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, which is headquartered in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

Black Tie Dinner will have a full program line-up with a specially arranged tribute to the Black Tie Dinner Beneficiaries featuring Broadway entertainer Gavin Creel who will perform with the Turtle Creek Chorale. Black Tie Dinner will also honor Reverend Carol West with the Kuchling Humanitarian Award and American Airlines with the Elizabeth Birch Equality Award.

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ABOUT BLACK TIE DINNER:

Black Tie Dinner, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that raises funds for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender supportive organizations through a premier event of empowerment, education and entertainment in partnership with the community. The event has headlined local and national celebrities and leaders such as Maya Angelou, Ann Richards, Geena Davis, Lily Tomlin, Goldie Hawn, Martin Sheen and, most recently, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom.

Black Tie Dinner, Inc. began in Dallas in 1982 to help support the Human Rights Campaign Fund. There were 140 guests at the first Dinner, which raised \$6,000. In 2009, the Dinner distributed \$1.04 million to 19 local beneficiaries and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. In its 28-year history, the dinner has distributed almost \$14 million.

To attend this year's Black Tie Dinner, visit blacktie.org to learn how to become a Table Captain or Dinner Sponsor. The secure, user-friendly Black Tie Dinner website allows individuals and companies to purchase and organize tables of 10, invite table guests and make payments.

To learn more about table sales and the Table Captain process, contact Mitzi Lemons at mlemons@blacktie.org or call (972) 733-9200, ext. 7. For Sponsor information, contact Maggie McQuown at mmcquown@blacktie.org or (972)733-9200, ext. 8.

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