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## **Grammy Award winners Gloria Gaynor and Miri Ben-Ari, as well as the Critically Acclaimed “Dance Times Square” Salsa Dance Troupe to Perform at this Year’s Gracie Allen Awards Gala**

(McLean, VA – June 17, 2005) – American Women in Radio and Television (AWRT) will honor the 2005 National Gracie Allen Award winners at a celebrity gala at New York’s Marriott Marquis Ballroom on Wednesday, June 22, 2005. The black-tie event will feature performances by **Grammy Award winners disco queen Gloria Gaynor and Miri Ben-Ari, the Hip-Hop Violinist, as well as the award winning salsa sensations, “Dance Times Square.”** This year’s orchestra will be **Eric Redd and Onyx.** The Gracie Allen Awards (also known as “the Gracies”) will take place Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> and recognizes exemplary programming created for women, by women and about women in all facets of electronic media including radio, television, cable and web-based media.

Each year, the Gracies Gala attracts the best and the brightest in radio, television, and cable. From CNN anchor **Paula Zahn**, who will be this year’s Host and Honorary Chair, to *O Magazine’s* **Gayle King**, *All My Children* star **Susan Lucci**, Oxygen Network’s **Geraldine Laybourne**, broadcast journalist **Linda Ellerbee**, Court TV’s **Dominick Dunne**, **Gloria Steinem** and CNBC personal finance guru **Suze Orman**, this year’s Gracies will honor its own with serious broadcasting and cable star power in the house.

Grammy Award winning songstress Gloria Gaynor has become one of the best-known female disco artists in history. The ongoing success of her monster 1979 smash hit (and subsequent "woman's anthem"), "I Will Survive." was awarded the first Grammy Award for Best Disco Recording in 1980. Gaynor began issuing albums on a regular basis beginning in 1975 and with her 1976 release *Never Can Say Goodbye*, the singer became one of the first-ever dance artists to issue an album aimed primarily for club use (there were no breaks between the songs, as one track would automatically segue into the next), a method used to this day by DJ’s and certain dance artists. "I Will Survive" has taken on a life of its own. It remains popular in dance clubs and has appeared on countless movie soundtracks and dance/disco compilations. Gaynor continues to issue albums and play shows (especially in Europe) and during the late '90s issued an autobiography (also titled *I Will Survive*), as well as appearing for a two-week run on Broadway's hit musical *Smokey Joe's Café*.

Grammy Award winner Miri Ben-Ari, known as the Hip-Hop Violinist, was discovered by artists like Jay-Z, Wyclef Jean and Kanye West. Her signature interpretive and passionate violin on Kanye West’s 2004 smash hit album *The College Dropout* garnered Ben-Ari a Grammy as co-writer of the hit “Jesus Walks” and her stamp on Twista’s “Overnight Celebrity” hit has helped make Miri a force to be reckoned with in hip-hop. Her debut album on Universal is due out August 23<sup>rd</sup> and boasts all-star performances by Kanye West, Anthony Hamilton, Ghostface, Scarface, Twista, John Legend and others.

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As United States Professional Latin-American Dance Champions, Tony Meredith and Melanie LaPatin, the choreographers of the passionate and provocative dance troupe, "Dance Times Square," have traveled the world representing the United States 12 times in the Professional World Latin American Dance Championships. This dance duo has excelled as coaches of top dancers around the world and as choreographers in film, television and Broadway. Their feature film performances include: *Dance with Me*, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, *Let It Be Me*, and *The Last Days of Disco*.

Featuring bandleader Eric Redd, Gracie's house band Onyx is comprised of some of the most outstanding musicians New York has to offer. This exciting group of artists have performed with a wide range of the most successful acts in the world, including Aretha Franklin, Alicia Keys, Ani DiFranco, KD Lang, James Brown, Carly Simon, Diane Reeves, Barbra Streisand and Van Morrison.

The Gracies are presented by the Foundation of AWRT, the philanthropic arm of AWRT that supports educational programs, charitable activities, public service campaigns and scholarships to benefit the public, the electronic media and allied fields. The Gracie Allen Awards, established in 1975, honors programming and individuals of the highest caliber in all facets of electronic media, including news, drama, comedy, commercials, public service, documentary and sports.

This event is made possible through the generous support of our members, title sponsor Dove and the Campaign for Real Beauty and the following additional sponsors: American Legacy Foundation; ABC Radio Networks; Arbitron; CBS News; Clear Channel Radio; CNN; Court TV; Disney-ABC Television Group; Interep; Jones Radio Networks; Katz Media Group; Lifetime Television; NBC News; Oxygen Media; Suze Orman Show; Wal-Mart; WCBS-TV/CBS2; Wyndham Hotels & Resorts; ABC News; Bloomberg; NBC's *The Today Show*; Susquehanna Radio Corp, and WE: Women's Entertainment.

Tickets for the Gala are \$225 for AWRT Members, \$250 for Non-Members, and \$300 (if available) at the door. Tickets for the Gala can be purchased online at [www.awrt.org](http://www.awrt.org). Sponsor packages are available ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000. For more information, please contact AWRT Headquarters at (703) 506-3290. For more information about the Gracie Allen Awards, please visit [www.awrt.org](http://www.awrt.org).

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**About AWRT:** The year 2001 marked the 50th Anniversary and a golden highlight for American Women in Radio and Television (AWRT) Inc., the longest established professional association dedicated to advancing the impact of women in the electronic media and allied fields. Headquartered in the Washington, DC-metropolitan area, AWRT carries forth its mission by educating, advocating and acting as a resource to its members and the industry at large. Founded in 1951, AWRT works to improve the quality of electronic media; promote the entry, development and advancement of women in the media; serve as a medium for communication and idea exchange; and become active in community concerns.

**About The Foundation of AWRT:** The Foundation of AWRT is the philanthropic arm of American Women in Radio and Television, supporting educational programs, charitable activities, public service campaigns and scholarships to benefit the public, the electronic media and allied fields. The Foundation of AWRT has created partnerships and joint initiatives with the National Middle School Association, the Emma Bowen Foundation, the American Red Cross and other organizations that are philosophically aligned with the mission of the Foundation of AWRT. The Foundation supports several public service campaigns including most recently *AWRT Empowering America* which pays tribute to many of America's most pioneering and inspiring women. Through this initiative, the Foundation of AWRT has adopted needy urban middle schools around the country and provided educational donations derived from collateral based on the *Empowering America* program. The Foundation also produces nationally acclaimed recognition programs including the Gracie Allen Awards®, a live, New York-based gala that awards exemplary programming created for, by, and about women.

For more information about AWRT and the Foundation of AWRT, including membership, call its headquarters at (703) 506-3290, or visit its web site at [www.awrt.org](http://www.awrt.org).