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American Women in Radio & Television Announces Laureen Ong, President, National Geographic Channel, as Keynote Speaker for Gracie Awards Luncheon

June 8, 2006 (McLean, VA) - American Women in Radio & Television (AWRT) is pleased to announce that **Laureen Ong**, President, National Geographic Channel (NGC), will be this year's Gracie Allen Awards® Luncheon Keynote Speaker. The Gracies® luncheon will take place on Tuesday, June 20, 2006 at 12:30 p.m. at the Tavern on the Green New York. The Gracies Luncheon will be hosted by CBS News' *The Early Show* Anchor, **Rene Syler**. The Gracie Allen Awards 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. **(The Gracies Lunch is preceded by the National Gracie Gala the evening prior at the Marriott Marquis Hotel Broadway Ballroom.)**

Laureen Ong was hired as the National Geographic Channel's President and first employee in April 2000. In 2005, Ong was named as Woman of the Year by WICT (Women in Cable Telecommunications) and was made a member of the C-100, an association of some of the nation's most influential Chinese-Americans. Since launching the popular new network on New Year's Day, 2001, she has seen NGC earn some of the fastest distribution growth in cable history, and more recently, the fastest ratings growth in television. Broadcasting to an initial 10 million households, it now reaches an impressive 60 million homes -- and counting. To celebrate its fifth anniversary this past January, Ong oversaw the launch of NGC-HD, and all high-definition channel.

Ong has worked in broadcasting her entire career, breaking down barriers each step of the way. She was Vice President of Broadcasting for the Chicago White Sox, where she was instrumental in launching one of the first regional sports networks, SportsVision. She is still a limited partner with the World Champion Chicago White Sox today. Prior to joining NGC, Ong was Vice President and General Manager of WTTG, one of Fox's largest and most successful television stations. Ong was the first, and possibly the only, Asian-American woman to lead a top ten market affiliate.

"I am delighted that Laureen Ong will give the keynote address for the Gracies luncheon," said Maria E. Brennan, CAE, AWRT's Executive Director. "Ms. Ong is one of the most versatile, resourceful, and creative women in television and I look forward to hearing her speak about her experiences along the way."

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A black-tie Gala, hosted by award-winning actor, and soon to be talk show host, **Megan Mullally**, will be held the previous evening, June 19, 2006, from 6:00-10:00 p.m. in the Broadway Ballroom of the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel, to honor the 2006 Gracie Allen Awards National Award winners.

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.

Tickets for the Gala are \$275 for AWRT Members, \$300 for Non-Members, and \$350 (if available) at the door. Tickets for the Gala can be purchased online at www.awrt.org.

Tickets for the Luncheon are \$140 for AWRT Members, \$165 for Non-Members and \$200 (if available) at the door. Tickets for the Luncheon can be purchased online at www.awrt.org.

Sponsor packages are available for both these events. For more information, please contact AWRT Headquarters at (703) 506-3290.

The event is made possible through the generous support of the 2006 title sponsor Dove and *The Campaign for Real Beauty* and the following additional sponsors: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc./SAM'S CLUB; Monica Horan; ABC Disney Television Group; ABC Radio Networks; Arbitron; CBS News; CBS Paramount Domestic Television; CBS Sports and WCBS-TV/CBS2; Clear Channel Radio; CNBC; CNN; Friends of Lesley Visser; HBO; Jones Radio Networks; Judge Judy; Katz Media Group; Lifetime Networks; NBC News; Oxygen Media LLC; The Kaplan Thaler Group; *The Suze Orman Show*; Interep; and Washington Mutual.

For more information about the Gracie Allen Awards, please visit www.awrt.org.

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.

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