



Photo by David M. Russell

American Women in Radio & Television Announces Lesley Visser as Host and Honorary Chair of the 2007 Annual Gracie Awards Gala

May 9, 2007 (McLean, VA) – American Women in Radio and Television (AWRT) will honor the contributions and achievements of women in electronic media at the 32nd Annual Gracie Awards Gala at the New York Marriott Marquis on Monday, June 18, 2007. Legendary CBS sportscaster and Pro Football Hall of Famer **Lesley Visser** will serve as this year's Host and Honorary Chair of the event. The Gracie Awards® (also known as "the Gracies®") recognize exemplary programming created for women, by women, and about women in all facets of electronic media, including radio, television, cable and new media.

Visser is almost always associated with the word "first." She was the first woman sportscaster to carry the Olympic Torch, the first woman assigned to Monday Night Football, the first woman assigned to a Super Bowl sideline, the first woman to handle a Super Bowl Trophy presentation and is the only sportscaster, male or female, to have worked on the network broadcast of the Final Four, the Super Bowl, the World Series, the NBA Finals, the Triple Crown, the Olympics, the US Open and the World Figure Skating Championship.

In 2006, Visser added two more firsts to her prestigious trailblazing career, as the first woman to be recognized by the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Also in 2006, Visser became the first woman sportscaster to win the Gracie Award for Outstanding Achievement of an Individual Reporter or Correspondent from AWRT. In May of 2007, Lesley will be bestowed with an honorary doctorate degree from her alma mater Boston College.

"Lesley Visser embodies the values that we seek to honor with the Gracie Awards. She has paved the way for all women in the electronic media with her professionalism and integrity," stated AWRT 2007 National Chair, Mary Bennett, EVP of the Radio Advertising Bureau.

Added AWRT President, Maria E. Brennan, CAE, "Lesley's professional accomplishments have earned her the status of an icon. As importantly, Lesley always finds time to give back to the industry, women and more worthy causes. We are delighted to have her as this year's Gracies host."

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 radio, television, cable and web-based media, including news, drama, comedy, commercials, public service, documentary and sports.

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The 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: Arbitron, Bloomberg, CBS News, Clear Channel Radio, CNN, Court TV, Disney/ABC Television Group, HBO Entertainment, Interep, Katz Media Group, NBC News, Oxygen Media, Retirement Living Television, Suze Orman Media, and WestStar Digital Audio.

The Gracie Awards recognizes exemplary programming created for, by and about women in all facets of electronic media including radio, television, cable and web-based media. Tickets for the Gala are \$325 for AWRT Members, \$395 for Non-Members, and \$425 (if available) at the door.

For more information about the Gracie Awards, please visit http://www.awrt.org/awards/gracie_allen.html.

About AWRT: The year 2007 marks the 56th Anniversary of American Women in Radio & Television (AWRT), the longest established professional association dedicated to advancing women in media and entertainment. 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 field; foster communication and idea exchange; and give back to the community we serve.

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.

visit its web site at www.awrt.org.

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