

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 21, 2017

For Further Information:

Joseph Zwilling
646-794-2997
joseph.zwilling@archny.org

Mercedes Lopez Blanco
646-794-2996
mercedes.lopezblanco@archny.org

House Speaker Paul Ryan to Serve as Keynote Speaker for the 72nd Annual Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner

September 21, 2017 (NEW YORK) — House Speaker Paul Ryan will deliver the keynote address at this year's 72nd annual Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner. During the dinner, scheduled for Thursday, October 19, 2017 in the Grand Ballroom of New York's Hilton Hotel Midtown, Speaker Ryan will share the dais with Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, and deliver the evening's principal speech in the spirit of collegiality and good-humor that is a hallmark of the annual gala.

In keeping with the longstanding tradition of the Foundation's signature event, the evening offers Speaker Ryan an opportunity to come together with some of the country's most prominent civic, business, and religious leaders to support charities that serve New York's neediest children.

A member of St. John Vianney's Parish in Wisconsin, where he served in his youth as an altar boy, Speaker Ryan's commitment to empowering local organizations in the community is a passion he shares with the Foundation. "The Al Smith Dinner is a fun evening, but with a serious purpose: help those who have the least. I'm honored to be a part of this special dinner that has supported New York's children for decades," Speaker Ryan said upon accepting the Foundation's invitation.

(more)

Page Two

The 2017 Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner also features a unique addition to the traditional program. Actress Patricia Heaton will act as Emcee for the event, marking the first time a woman has served in that capacity. Miss Heaton is best known for portraying Debra Barone on the CBS sitcom *Everybody Loves Raymond* from 1996 to 2005, and as Frances "Frankie" Heck on the ABC sitcom *The Middle* (2009–present).

She is a three-time Emmy Award winner — twice winning the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series in 2000 and 2001 for *Everybody Loves Raymond*, and a Daytime Emmy for Outstanding Culinary Program as host/executive producer of Patricia Heaton Parties.

In another first for the Foundation, Mary Erdoes, who previously served on the Foundation's Board of Directors will participate in her first Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner in her new role as Vice Chair.

The Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner honors a cause that transcends the polarizing political rhetoric of the day and exemplifies the vision of Gov. Alfred E. Smith, known as "The Happy Warrior" for his ability to maintain his positive outlook even as he tackled the pressing social issues of his day. Each year the Foundation carries on the tradition of the "Happy Warrior" by recognizing an individual who exemplifies the character and leadership of Governor Alfred E. Smith. The 2017 Happy Warrior Award recipient will be Mr. John K. Castle, Chairman and CEO, Castle Harlan, Inc.

Over the course of seven decades, the delivery of keynote addresses by luminaries from around the world has become a mainstay at the dinner. Speaker Ryan joins an illustrious list of political dignitaries, cultural leaders, and presidential candidates who have served as speakers, including John F. Kennedy, Winston Churchill, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, Barack Obama, Tony Blair, Colin Powell, Tim Russert, Charlie Rose, Michael Bloomberg, and many more. Last year's dinner speakers were Presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

(more)

Page Three

Presided over by Cardinal Dolan, speakers at the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner often share self-deprecating humor as well as timely messages about the moral imperative of the Foundation's mission. The annual Dinner is dedicated to the memory of Alfred E. Smith, former Governor of the State of New York and the first Catholic to be nominated by a major political party as a candidate for President of the United States.

The Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation has raised hundreds of millions to provide support for the neediest children in New York. Charities and educational institutions devoted to New York's children are the beneficiaries of the event.

###

EDITORS' NOTE:

CREDENTIALS ISSUED BY THE ALFRED E. SMITH MEMORIAL FOUNDATION WILL BE REQUIRED FOR JOURNALISTS WISHING TO COVER THE DINNER. TO APPLY FOR YOUR CREDENTIAL KINDLY VISIT:
[Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner 2017 - Credential Application Portal](#)

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT SPACE IS LIMITED AND AN APPLICATION FOR A CREDENTIAL DOES NOT NECESSARILY GUARANTEE ONE WILL BE PROVIDED.