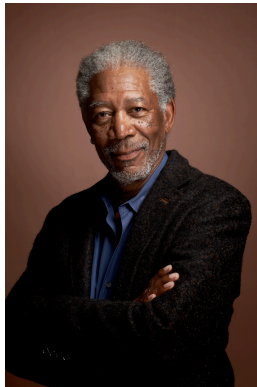


**MORGAN FREEMAN AND JEFF SKOLL
TO BE HONORED AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE 14TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

Exclusive 20th Anniversary “Backstage at the Geffen” Event

Set for Sunday, May 22, 2016

City National Bank Returns as Title Sponsor



Morgan Freeman



Jeff Skoll

LOS ANGELES (March 3rd, 2016) -- Once a year at the Geffen Playhouse, a dream ensemble cast meets for a once-in-a-lifetime event that unleashes unforgettable, unscripted stories and performances from some of the world's most talented individuals.

“Backstage at the Geffen,” a by-invitation-only fundraiser gathers superstars from the worlds of stage and screen to share often irreverent, behind-the-curtain stories of the struggles and surprises that memorably shaped their lives and careers. Always a sold-out show, the event at the not-for-profit theater has raised millions to support education and the arts. David Geffen will serve as 20th Anniversary Honorary Chair.

The 14th annual fundraiser, marking the 20th anniversary of the Geffen Playhouse, is slated for Sunday, May 22, 2016 in the Gil Cates Theater and will honor Oscar-winning actor Morgan Freeman with the Distinction in Theater Award and philanthropist and social entrepreneur Jeff Skoll with the Distinction in Service Award. The evening includes a pre-show dinner for the Host Committee and Honorees.

Geffen Playhouse is honored to have **City National Bank** continue for the 7th consecutive year as Title Sponsor and is joined by **Audi of America**, returning as a Presenting Sponsor for the 11th year.

Funds raised are earmarked for a host of Geffen Playhouse endeavors including new play development, playwright commissions, second productions and artistic risks, as well as the theater's award-winning education and outreach programs, which help bring the excitement of live theater to more than 15,000 disadvantaged youth, seniors, veterans and community members annually.

“*Backstage*’ illustrates the great creative chemistry that results when such all-star talent comes together for a great cause,” said Geffen executive director Gil Cates, Jr., who produces the show in tandem with Geffen Playhouse board member Kevin Bright. “In 14 years, *Backstage*’ has evolved to become much more than a fundraiser, but also a living testament to the vitality of theater, music and the arts.”

With an audience of 500, the event creates a rare atmosphere of honesty and hilarity as veteran entertainers, producers and directors lift the curtain on the often-messy work of creating entertainment magic--and then create some more. The evening of insiders sharing their songs and tales with other insiders sets the stage for surprises, including last year’s unannounced appearance by Lady Gaga.

About Morgan Freeman

Academy Award winner Morgan Freeman, recipient of the Distinction in Theater Award is one of America’s most recognizable figures and voices. He began his acting career in the off-Broadway productions of “The Niggerlovers” and the all African-American production of “Hello Dolly.” In 1978 Freeman won a Drama Desk Award and a Tony nomination for “The Mighty Gents.” He has received accolades and awards, including Obie Awards in 1980, 1984 and 1987 and a second Drama Desk Nomination in 1987 for Alfred Uhry’s “Driving Miss Daisy” and reprised in the 1989 movie of the same name. In 2005 Freeman won an Academy Award for “Million Dollar Baby.” Freeman also has received nominations for Best Supporting Actor for “Street Smart,” for Best Actor for “The Shawshank Redemption,” and for Best Actor for “Invictus.” He also won the Golden Globe for “Driving Miss Daisy.” Freeman has received the Kennedy Center Honor, the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the Golden Globes and the AFI Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2010, Freeman won the National Board of Review Award for his performance as Nelson Mandela in “Invictus” produced by Revelations Entertainment, the company he co-founded with producer Lori McCreary. Freeman is executive producer on the Revelations hit CBS series “Madam Secretary” currently in its second season. Freeman hosts and is an executive producer for Revelations’ Emmy nominated series “Through the Wormhole with Morgan Freeman,” which is starting its seventh season on Discovery Science. Also through Revelations, he will produce “The Story of God with Morgan Freeman” on the National Geographic Channel. His upcoming films include “London Has Fallen,” Warner Bros.’ “Going In Style,” Alfa Films’ “Now You See Me 2” and “Ben-Hur.” Most recently, Freeman starred in “5 Flights Up” with Diane Keaton, “Last Knights,” “Lucy,” “Dolphin Tale 2,” “Transcendence,” “The Lego Movie,” “Last Vegas,” “Now You See Me,” “Oblivion,” “Olympus Has Fallen” and “The Dark Knight Rises.”

About Jeff Skoll

Distinction in Service honoree Jeff Skoll is an entrepreneur devoted to creating a sustainable world of peace and prosperity. Over the last 15 years, Jeff has created an innovative portfolio of philanthropic and commercial enterprises, including Participant Media, The Skoll Foundation, Skoll Global Threats Fund, and Capricorn Investment Group. Each is a distinctive catalyst for changing the issues that most affect the survival and thriving of humanity. Jeff’s entrepreneurial approach is unique: driving large-scale, permanent social impact by investing in a range of efforts that integrate powerful stories, data, capital markets, technology, partnerships, and organized learning networks. Founded by Jeff over a decade ago, Participant Media is the world’s leading entertainment company focused on advocacy and social impact. Participant has produced more than 80 full length narrative and documentary films that include *Spotlight*, *Bridge of Spies*, *Beasts of No Nation*, *Lincoln*, *The Help*, *Good Night and Good Luck*. Documentary films include *The Look of Silence*, *The Cove*, *Food Inc.*, *He Named Me Malala*, *CITIZENFOUR*, *Waiting for “Superman”* and *An Inconvenient Truth*. These films collectively have garnered 50 Academy Award® nominations and eleven wins. Companion campaigns run by Participant have shaped consumer’s beliefs and actions, and in some cases have been instrumental in changing national and international policies working hand-in-hand with non-profit partners. Through its content, campaigns, and various platforms for engagement, Participant and its NGO partners have found the power of storytelling to be a highly effective and leveraged form of philanthropy. Jeff was the first full time employee and President of eBay, where he experienced firsthand the power of combining

entrepreneurship, technology and trust in people. His work today embodies those critical lessons learned from eBay. All of Jeff's organizations rely on the premise that people are basically good, and that if good people are given the opportunity to do the right thing, they will.

Morgan Freeman and Jeff Skoll join an elite group of past honorees including: Mellody Hobson and George Lucas, Sir Elton John and David Furnish, Julie Andrews, Carol Burnett, Steve Martin, Kristin Chenoweth, Helen Mirren, Billy Crystal, Rita Wilson, Bruce Ramer, Jim Gianopulos, Creative Artists Agency, Alan Horn, Barry Meyer, Leslie Moonves, Herb Gelfand, Annette Bening, Robert Iger, and Colin Callender.

ABOUT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and second productions, the not-for-profit organization continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company was founded by Gilbert Cates, and is currently helmed by Artistic Director Randall Arney, Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha Henderson and Pamela Robinson. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains extensive education and community engagement programs, designed to involve underserved young people and the community at large in the arts. Following a strong 2014/2015 season during which five productions extended, the company's 20th anniversary season features eight productions (two world and three West Coast premieres) featuring some of the nation's leading playwrights and directors. www.geffenplayhouse.com.

ABOUT CITY NATIONAL BANK

City National Bank is the wholly owned subsidiary of City National Corporation (NYSE: CYN). It is backed by \$26.3 billion in total assets, and provides banking, investment and trust services through 78 offices, including 16 full-service regional centers, in Southern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, Nevada, New York City, Nashville, Tenn., and Atlanta. The company and its investment affiliates manage or administer \$56.7 billion in client investment assets, including \$38 billion under direct management. For more information about City National, visit the company's website at cnb.com.

Host Committee memberships/ levels of support begin at \$5000. Individual mezzanine tickets, \$1500. For more information, please visit www.geffenplayhouse.com/backstage or call (310)208-6500, ext. 112.

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