



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Meredith Hritz

Jacobson Strategic Communications

513-604-6850/ meredithhritz@jacobsonstrategic.com

**2016 MARIAN ANDERSON AWARD TO BE PRESENTED TO PATTI LABELLE AND  
GAMBLE & HUFF**

*Gala Concert on November 15, 2016 To Feature Music Legends*

**PHILADELPHIA, PA. (JUNE 14, 2016)** – Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney announced today that Patti LaBelle and Gamble & Huff will receive the 2016 Marian Anderson Award at the annually anticipated Gala on November 15, 2016, at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. This is the first year since 2008 that the Award has been presented to multiple recipients. Honoring these individuals also represents a first-time focus on Philadelphia’s contributions to the popular music world and a truly unique tribute to the Award’s namesake, Marian Anderson, an esteemed singer and beloved Philadelphian. The Marian Anderson Award was created to celebrate critically acclaimed artists who have used their talents for personal artistic expression and whose bodies of work have contributed to our society in a singular manner.

As a singer, actress, author, chef, and humanitarian, Ms. LaBelle is truly a renaissance woman. Ms. LaBelle’s music career evolved from singing in her local choir to now being commonly recognized as “The Godmother of Soul.” In the early 1960’s, she fronted a band called, “Patti LaBelle and the BlueBelles,” later named, “LaBelle,” which became the first African American singing group to appear on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine. Ms. LaBelle went on to launch a solo career in which she continues to dazzle audiences with a voice that has been honored with three Grammy Awards and countless other accolades.

When it comes to the music industry, Gamble & Huff, the record production team led by Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, have done it all. In 1971, the duo launched their own label, Philadelphia International Records and secured a distribution deal with CBS. Gamble & Huff went on to write pop and R&B #1 hits, numerous gold and platinum records, as well as Grammy Award winning songs and

BMI songwriters' awards honorees. Their musical success secured them induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, Dance Music Hall of Fame, and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and won them the Trustees Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, the Ahmet Ertegun Award, and the Ivor Novello Award.

"The Marian Anderson Award celebrates not only esteemed artists, but dedicated humanitarians," said Mayor Kenney. "This year is particularly special as we honor the legacy of three world-renowned members of the musical community who are also Philadelphians. From supporting the needs of children to revitalizing South Philadelphia, Patti LaBelle and Gamble & Huff truly embody the artistic greatness and generous spirit exemplified in Marian Anderson herself."

Ms. LaBelle's interests have led her to become involved in many philanthropic efforts. In support of adoption, foster care and children's issues as a whole, Ms. LaBelle has been an advocate of Big Sisters and the United Negro College Fund. After being diagnosed with diabetes, Ms. LaBelle became a spokesperson for the American Diabetes Association.

When learning she would receive the award, Ms. LaBelle said, "I am so humbled to be receiving a Marian Anderson Award alongside my brothers, Mr. Kenny Gamble and Mr. Leon Huff. Marian Anderson was an inspiration to me and I pray that I can live up to the true spirit of this honor!"

Mr. Gamble has been deeply committed to renovation and restoration of South Philadelphia since the creation of a song called "Let's Clean Up the Ghetto," that kicked off a campaign. The campaign turned into a calling, and Mr. Gamble led a team, "Universal Companies," to open a restaurant and purchase over 100 condemned properties. These properties were turned into homes, a project that provided jobs to the community, and were rented to low-income and middle-income families. In addition to revitalizing the area framed by Christian and South Streets and Broad and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets, Mr. Gamble has been an ardent supporter of and contributor to the T.J. Martell Leukemia Foundation and the AMC Cancer Research Center and Hospital, which honored him with the Humanitarian Award in 1980.

Gamble & Huff remarked, "We are extremely honored and excited to be recipients of this year's Marian Anderson Award. To receive an award from this prestigious organization, that is based in our hometown of Philadelphia, really warms our hearts with this recognition of our musical contributions over the past 50 years. But more importantly, we are equally proud and further honored to receive this recognition that is named after the great African-American pioneer and music legend, Ms. Marian Anderson. And thus we are forever appreciative to be in company of other honorees and legends that have received this iconic and historic award in the past in our great City of Philadelphia"

In addition to honoring multiple recipients, this year's Award marks another exciting change. The Marian Anderson Award will be partnering with the Kimmel Center, the world-class performing arts campus at the heart of Philadelphia, to bring together some of the finest artists before the public today on the Verizon Hall stage. The Kimmel Center began to take shape in 1996 as a combined product of Mayor Edward Rendell's desire to provide a space for performing arts in Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Orchestra's initiative to develop a permanent home. Since opening in 2001, the Center's many venues have played host to the foremost performers of our time.

Nina C. Tinari, Chairwoman of The Marian Anderson Award, thanked the Award's lead sponsors Wells Fargo, PECO, and COMCAST for their unwavering support, and spoke of the Board's decision to honor Ms. LaBelle and Gamble & Huff. "Each year, I am so grateful for the continued support of our sponsors, as well as that of our amazing community and city, Philadelphia. The Gala this fall will truly be an evening to remember. This year marks the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gamble & Huff's record label, Philadelphia International Records, the label to which Patti LaBelle was signed. We are delighted to celebrate the musical genius and philanthropic efforts of this year's honorees."

For information about attending the November 15 Award Gala Dinner, please call the Award office at [215-893-1837](tel:215-893-1837). For tickets to the Gala Concert, go to: <https://www.kimmelcenter.org/>. Visit [www.marianandersonaward.org](http://www.marianandersonaward.org) for more information about the organization.

###