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**RICHARD LAWSON AND TINA KNOWLES LAWSON HOST  
WEARABLE ART GALA IN LOS ANGELES TO BENEFIT NEWLY BUILT  
WACO THEATER CENTER**

**MASTER OF CEREMONIES, ACTOR/WRITER CHRIS SPENCER  
JOINED BY STAR JONES**

**BEYONCÉ, SOLANGE KNOWLES, BIANCA LAWSON AND KELLY  
ROWLAND, HONORARY CHAIRPERSONS**

**LOS ANGELES, April 17, 2017** – The inaugural Wearable Art Gala, hosted by Richard Lawson and Tina Knowles Lawson, will take place on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at the California African American Museum (CAAM).

The gala will raise money for WACO Theater Center (WACOTC), Los Angeles' newest theatrical and cultural institution. WACO, which stands for *Where Art Can Occur*, was founded and built by Tina Knowles Lawson, a fashion designer, art collector and philanthropist; and actor, director and master acting teacher, Richard Lawson. The husband and wife team, purveyors and nurturers of all things creative, will host the gala. Their family – Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Solange Knowles, Bianca Lawson and Kelly Rowland – will serve as the Gala's Honorary Chairpersons and judges for the evening's best wearable art creations.

“Wearable art draws influence from the world of couture, street fashion, costume design, technology and fantasy – and can lead to era-defining collaborations between fashion designers and artists,” says Knowles Lawson who invites gala patrons to dress in uniquely designed wearable

art attire or handmade pieces. “Our mission is to create a place where we can celebrate an individual’s artistic creation and self-expression through fashion, reflecting fine art, innovation, craftsmanship and imagination.”

“For my mother,” says Solange Knowles, “the gala reflects her commitment to artists in all mediums and at all levels, from working closely with design students to fostering actors in a new theatrical space to celebrating the world’s finest contemporary artists. She’s always and forever lighting the path for creative individuals.”

Beyoncé adds, “Our mother is the most imaginative human being we know. She is engaged with artists all over the world as an art collector and mentor. The Wearable Art Gala brings together everything that she loves – fashion, art, music, performance and mentorship.”

Bianca Lawson says of her father: “My father’s devotion to his students and his mentees reflects his own powerful and deep connection to the influential mentors in his life: Milton Katselas, the world-renowned acting teacher, and Sonny Jim Gaines, a great actor and father figure to him. The concepts of having an incredible work ethic, honing your craft, and then learning how to administrate your career have been passed down to my father, and now, he wholeheartedly gives them to his students, who have also learned to become self-determined and make a difference in the world of entertainment, film, TV, and theater.”

Knowles Lawson’s commitment to mentorship and the arts has won her recognition by Variety Magazine and Sundial Brands who will honor her at the Variety Power of Women event on April 21 in New York where she will receive the Community Commerce Impact Award, presented by SheaMoisture, and be included in the April 18 issue of Variety magazine recognizing her work to empower communities. Power of Women honors women who dedicate their time and energy to philanthropic and other causes that improve our world. Other honorees this year include Jessica Chastain, Chelsea Clinton, Gayle King, Blake Lively, Audra McDonald and Shari Redstone. “We chose to honor Ms. Tina because she has demonstrated ongoing efforts to positively impact underserved communities through entrepreneurship, women’s and girls’ empowerment,

and the incredible work she has done to empower people to live more beautiful lives through education, the arts, poverty alleviation and wellness, as well as her most recent endeavor – WACO,” says Sundial Brand’s Latraviette D. Smith-Wilson, Senior Vice President, Communications.

The Lawsons’ mission for the Wearable Art Gala includes the Silent and Live Auction of fine art works by younger contemporary visual artists such as Toyin Oji Odutola, Mr. Brainwash (MBW), Kennedy Yanko, Stephon Senegal, and Robert Pruitt; and such legendary artists as Radcliffe Bailey, Élon Brasil, Synthia Saint James and Betye Saar – many who will be attending in support of the Gala and to see their works auctioned for charity. In addition to the world’s most celebrated artists, the Gala will introduce original pieces of jewelry by such designers as Lorraine Schwartz and Cynthia Bach, acclaimed for their illustrious designs and philanthropy.

Actor, comedian, writer, and producer Chris Spencer will serve as the Gala’s master of ceremonies. Spencer co-starred in such films as *Don’t Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in The Hood*, *The Sixth Man*, *Significant Others*, and *Postal*. As a writer, he has worked with the Wayans family, Jamie Foxx, and helped Nick Cannon create MTV’s “Wild ‘N Out.” Spencer’s standup routine has been featured on “The Chris Rock Show”, “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” and HBO’s “Def Comedy Jam,” and he is one of the Executive Producers and Writers on the BET scripted comedy, “The Real Husbands of Hollywood.”

Star Jones will join Spencer to host the live auction portion of the evening. Jones, one of the original hosts of the ABC weekday morning talk show “The View”, is a lawyer, journalist, writer, fashion designer, and women's and diversity advocate who has written such books as *You Have to Stand for Something, or You'll Fall for Anything* and *Shine: A Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Journey to Finding Love*.

“All of this happens in one place, at one philanthropic event,” says Richard Lawson. “We want to make a difference in our underserved communities and empower, inspire, educate and mentor our youth so they can open the aperture of their minds to see the possibilities for a greater future for themselves and their communities. And with support from our community

and sponsors, these programs will foster generations of young, talented individuals to succeed in life.”

WACO Theater Center, a non-profit organization, offers the mentorship programs, Tina’s Angels and Richard’s Warriors, to girls and boys who are mentored and empowered by successful professionals. “We have to stand together and support our children so no one gets left behind,” says Knowles Lawson.

Relevant and thought provoking theatrical productions will be staged at 105-seat Theater Center, while the lobby will serve as a gallery to showcase new artists’ work. In addition, the Mobile Arts Theater program will provide underprivileged neighborhoods around Los Angeles with Theatrical Productions on Fridays, Live Music on Saturdays, and Comedy and Poetry on Sundays. Other WACO events include Parent/Child movie night, Free Dance, Modeling, Painting/Sculpting Workshops, and Children’s Open Mic Night.

Knowles Lawson is also collaborating with the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) to give students and alumni from across disciplines the opportunity to showcase their talent at the Gala.

The Lawsons’ Louisiana Creole ancestry will be reflected in the Gala’s festivities. Dinner will be presented by the famed LA restaurant Harold & Belle’s. Third-generation owners, Chef Ryan and Jessica Legaux, will share beloved family recipes of Creole classics throughout the evening. Specialty cocktails will be created by Gran Diamante Negro Tequila. Guests will be invited to enjoy activations ranging from African headwrap and couture accessories styled by Jamar Hart and designer emilienne cahtelain of Burkinabae, to ChalkShot by Kasey Jones. The California African American Museum (CAAM) galleries and current exhibitions will be open for viewing. Musical entertainment will include Los Angeles-based band, Bonne Musique Zydeco, and New Orleans’ own DJ Ike T, with dancing and night-long celebration.

## **WACO THEATER CENTER**

Located at 5144 Lankershim Boulevard, North Hollywood, CA 91601 in the NoHo Arts District. For classes, productions or to make a donation, visit [www.WACOTheaterCenter.com](http://www.WACOTheaterCenter.com)

## **TICKETS**

\$500. WACO Theater Center is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations will be applied to Tina's Angels, Richard's Warriors and Mobile Theater program. For tickets, visit [www.wacothatercenter.com/events/gala](http://www.wacothatercenter.com/events/gala)

## **AUCTION**

A Silent and Live Auction will be held at the gala. [www.biddingforgood.com/WACOTHEATERCENTER](http://www.biddingforgood.com/WACOTHEATERCENTER)

## **PRESS INQUIRIES**

Press and media, please apply for event credentials here: <http://wacothatercenter.com/press-form/>

**PRESS IMAGES** [www.wacothatercenter.com/press](http://www.wacothatercenter.com/press)

## **CAAM**

The California African American Museum researches, collects, preserves and interprets the history, art and culture of African Americans with emphasis on California and the Western United States. CAAM's 44,000 square feet facility houses three galleries, a 13,900 sq. ft. glass ceiling Sculpture Court, and a Research Library. [www.caamuseum.org](http://www.caamuseum.org)

## **SPONSORS**

WACO Theater Center and Wearable Art Gala is proud to be presented by Platinum Sponsor, **Sundial Brands**, a leading skincare and haircare manufacturer renowned for its innovative use of high-quality and culturally authentic natural ingredients, and the maker of SheaMoisture, Nubian Heritage, Madam C.J. Walker Beauty Culture and nyakio™. A certified B Corp company with a Fair for Life social and fair trade certification, Sundial engages in ethical and cruelty-free business practices manufacturing its products in state-of-the-art facilities in Long Island, NY. Through its

Community Commerce purpose-driven business model, the company creates opportunities for sustainable social and economic empowerment throughout its supply chain and communities domestically and internationally, focusing on entrepreneurship, women's empowerment, education and wellness. In 2015, Sundial was named to the Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies in the United States and received the WWD/Beauty Inc. award for "Corporate Social Responsibility Company of the Year." Widely credited with introducing the "New General Market" inclusion concept to the beauty and retail industries, Sundial Brands founder and CEO Richelieu Dennis began the company in 1991 with his college roommate, Nyema Tubman, and mother, Mary Dennis. [www.sundialbrands.com](http://www.sundialbrands.com)

Sponsors such as **Live Nation, Roc Nation, Lorraine Schwartz, Kaiser Permanente, Horowitz Family Foundation, Harold & Belle's Restaurant, Gran Diamante Negro, Earvin and Cookie Johnson, Lyft, N'Namdi Contemporary, LA Cares Mentoring Movement, Ziffren Law Firm, Morgan Stanley and Moët & Chandon Champagnes** join Sundial Brands as sponsors of WACO Theater Center and the Wearable Art Gala. [www.wacothatercenter.com/2017-sponsors](http://www.wacothatercenter.com/2017-sponsors)

**RICHARD LAWSON** has a distinguished career as an actor and master teacher that spans 5 decades. His first professional job was in the national company of the Pulitzer Prize winning play by Charles Gordone, *No Place to Be Somebody*. Selected films include Steven Spielberg's *Poltergeist*, Walter Hill's *Streets of Fire*, *Stick* with Burt Reynolds, *The Main Event* with Barbra Streisand and Ryan O'Neal, *Coming Home* with Jane Fonda and Jon Voight, *Audrey Rose* with Anthony Hopkins and Marsha Mason, *Wag the Dog*, starring Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman, *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*, starring Whoopi Goldberg and Angela Bassett, *Guess Who*, starring Bernie Mac and Ashton Kutcher, and *For Colored Girls*, directed by Tyler Perry. As an acting and teaching protégé of Milton Katselas, one of the most respected acting teachers in the world, Lawson recognized a hole in the teaching model, and went on to create the Richard Lawson Studios (RLS). Using a complete approach to acting that includes traditional scene study as well as audition technique, RLS integrates on-camera instruction, filmmaking, and business administration into a comprehensive course of

study. State-of-the-art computer technology is applied to his time-tested acting techniques. Richard imparts his 46 years of experience as a successful actor, teacher, public speaker, and drug counselor for the National Basketball Association to motivate and empower artists and non-artists alike, professionals, job-seekers and regular people to achieve their creative goals. For information about Richard Lawson, visit <http://www.richardlawson.net>

**TINA KNOWLES LAWSON** is a Fashion Designer who has been featured in *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *L'Official*, *InStyle*, and *Sports Illustrated*. Tina was a designer and stylist for the superstar group *Destiny's Child*, creating original garments for the tours, magazine shoots and television appearances, including *The VMAs*, *BET Awards*, and the *Grammys*. She has also designed for her daughter *Beyoncé's* tours and television performances, including *The Academy Awards*. Together, Tina and *Beyoncé* created three successful clothing lines: *House of Deréon*, *Deréon*, and the *Miss Tina* line. Knowles Lawson has hosted a show on the *Home Shopping Network (HSN)* and her work has been featured on "Good Morning America", "The View", "The Today Show", "The Oprah Winfrey Show", "Access Hollywood Live", "Tyra" and "Ellen". Tina has also designed costumes for a number of hit movies including *Dreamgirls*, *Pink Panther*, *Austin Powers in Goldmember*, *Obsessed* and *Cadillac Records*. Passionate about her philanthropic endeavors, Tina, her family and *Destiny's Child* member *Kelly Rowland* along with *St. John's Church* have built and established a center for young people known as *The Knowles-Rowland Center for Youth* located in *Houston, Texas*. Tina Knowles Lawson's philanthropic endeavors include the *Knowles-Temenos Place Apartments*, sponsored by the Knowles family's *Survivor Foundation*, which offers temporary living for those in need of shelter; and, in partnership with her daughter, *Beyoncé Knowles-Carter*, the *Beyoncé Cosmetology Center* at *Phoenix House* in *Brooklyn, New York* which empowers women to develop creative skills in the cosmetology trade and to carry their talent into the professional world. She was also one of the faces of *Miss A Meal*, a program founded by *Rudy and Juanita Rasmus*, to eradicate hunger in the *Houston* area. For her work, Knowles Lawson has been the recipient of the prestigious *Ace Awards*, the *International Global Leadership Award*, and the *Golden Hanger Award*. The *University of Houston* and the *Texas*

Women's Empowerment Foundation (TWEF) have recognized Tina for her philanthropic work and achievements in business. A natural teacher and adviser, she makes time to speak regularly at schools and mentors young women. Now relocated to Los Angeles, her philanthropic spirit has come with her and together with her husband, Richard Lawson, they have established the WACO Theater Center.