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RICHARD LAWSON AND TINA KNOWLES LAWSON BUILD NEW NON-PROFIT WACO THEATER CENTER IN LOS ANGELES

BEYONCÉ KNOWLES-CARTER, SOLANGE KNOWLES, BIANCA LAWSON AND KELLY ROWLAND HONORARY CHAIRPERSONS

VENUE TO BE HOME OF RICHARD LAWSON STUDIOS, MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS, MOBILE THEATER, STAGE PRODUCTIONS AND EMPOWERMENT CLASSES

WACO TO LAUNCH WITH INAUGURAL WEARABLE ART GALA ON APRIL 29, 2017 AT THE CAAM

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 7, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Actor and master acting teacher, **Richard Lawson**, and fashion designer, art collector and philanthropist **Tina Knowles Lawson** have joined forces to establish the new **WACO Theater Center** in Los Angeles. As Founders of the recently built non-profit art and performance center, the husband and wife team are kicking off the occasion with the first annual **Wearable Art Gala**. The charitable event is set to take place at the **California African American Museum (CAAM)** on **Saturday, April 29, 2017** in Los Angeles.

"We are truly thrilled to establish a new creative center in Los Angeles where art can occur," Tina Knowles Lawson says, alluding to WACO's acronym. "The purpose of this endeavor is empowering people to gain the skills and ability to identify and pursue their dreams no matter who they are or where they came from. It is also to give both professional and non-professional actors, artists and youth a place to celebrate their

own talent and artistry.” Richard Lawson adds, “WACO is our dream come true.”

For the inaugural Wearable Art Gala, the Lawsons looked no further than their own family to help bring attention to their mission. Thus, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Solange Knowles, Bianca Lawson and Kelly Rowland will serve as the Gala’s Honorary Chairpersons. The evening will include live and silent auctions and guests will be invited to explore the CAAM’s galleries and exhibitions. The museum serves as the ideal venue for the Gala and for wearable arts to be feted by guests dressing in art and original fashion designs. The wearable art movement is surging now due to fashion designers such as Knowles Lawson who bring greater attention to wearable art pieces by encouraging patrons to be creative and design their own wearable art. The Gala will be dedicated to the arts. “From performance, fashion, music, and the visual arts, including painting and sculpting, it’s never too late to develop and cultivate talent,” says Lawson. “Dreams do not have an expiration date, and that is what we plan to instill in our students at WACO Theater Center.” The Center will also be the new home of Richard Lawson Studios, the acting school founded by Lawson.

The Gala will introduce WACO Theater Center’s community mentorship programs, which include **Tina’s Angels** and **Richard’s Warriors** focusing on the education and empowerment of 14-15 girls and boys; and, the **Mobile Theater**, which takes theater, music and visual arts to underserved communities around the greater Los Angeles Area. The theater lobby will serve as a gallery to showcase new artists’ work.

“It is a proven fact that when you are exposed to the arts, you do better in other areas. We want to feed the mind of the entire young person from the arts to life skills. The mentoring program for young women will teach them everything from basic etiquette to public speaking. Young people need to clearly see the best versions of themselves,” says Knowles Lawson, who is also collaborating with the **Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM Los Angeles)** to foster the creativity of its students.

Fashion and design majors from across disciplines will have the opportunity to participate in the event’s production and showcase their talent at the Gala.

“We hope to establish the Wearable Art Gala as one of LA’s signature philanthropic events and bring awareness and attention to the power of the arts,” adds Lawson. The Gala will include festivities rooted in the Lawson’s Louisiana Creole ancestry such as Second Line music and dancing. A Creole-style dinner will be presented by the renowned Los Angeles restaurant Harold & Belle’s whose third-generation owners, Chef Ryan and Jessica Legaux, will present beloved family recipes of Creole classics throughout the evening.

WACO THEATER CENTER

The WACO Theater Center is dedicated to the empowerment of artists within a diversified pool of LA communities. It's founders mission is to create a space **Where Art Can Occur**. WACO Theater Center, where artists and non-artists alike will be taught to develop their true purpose and awaken their own individual power source which fuels their art. With Lawson's well-crafted guidance, students will learn to reach tangible goals by applying a systematic roadmap, allowing them to put their dreams into action, resulting in monetizing their unique talent no matter what their age. WACO's major community programs are the aforementioned Tina's Angels, Richards Warriors, and, Mobile Arts Theater. In addition, WACO Theater Center will produce original works along with other community events, such as Parent/Child movie date night, Free Dance, Modeling, Painting/Sculpting Workshops, and Children's Open Mic Night. WACO Theater Center is located at 5144 Lankershim Boulevard in North Hollywood's NoHo Arts District. For more information on classes and upcoming productions, visit www.WACOTheaterCenter.com

TICKETS

Tickets to the Wearable Art Gala include a dinner reception presented by Harold & Belle's Restaurant, musical entertainment, dancing and night long celebration at the California African American Museum (CAAM). The \$500 donation to WACO, a registered 501 (3)© non-profit organization, will be applied to funding community programs such as Tina's Angels and Richard's Warriors, and may be a tax deduction to patrons. For tickets to the Gala, visit www.wacothatercenter.com/events/gala

CAAM

The primary purpose of the California African American Museum is to research, collect, preserve and interpret 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.

RICHARD LAWSON has a long and 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. Some of his 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 finest and 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 more 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", "Hollywood Access 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 Theatre Center.

For event inquiries, contact:

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For sponsorship opportunities, contact Shay Wafer | swafer@651arts.org or visit wacothatercenter.com/sponsorship/

WEARABLE ART GALA – ART

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WACO THEATER CENTER - RENDERING

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WACO THEATER CENTER INTERIOR - RENDERING

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WACO MOBILE THEATER - RENDERING

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RICHARD LAWSON & TINA KNOWLES LAWSON – PHOTOGRAPH

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WHERE ART CAN OCCUR (WACO) LOGO

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