The National Portrait Gallery Presents a Portrait of Eunice Kennedy Shriver
Created by David Lenz

The National Portrait Gallery has commissioned a portrait of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of Special Olympics, from David Lenz, winner of the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2006. It is the first portrait commissioned by the museum of an individual who has not served as a President or First Lady. The painting will be presented as part of the National Portrait Gallery’s permanent collection in a private ceremony May 9; it will be on view immediately after the presentation when the museum opens at 11:30 a.m.

“Commissioning portraits of individuals who have influenced American history and culture has long been a goal of the National Portrait Gallery,” said Martin E. Sullivan, director of the museum. “Mrs. Shriver’s founding of Special Olympics has provided people who are intellectually disabled opportunities to thrive in our society. Her efforts have transformed the lives of individuals worldwide; millions of athletes in 180 countries participate annually in Special Olympics games.”

As part of the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition prize, the National Portrait Gallery commissions a work from the winning artist to depict a living subject for the collection. Shriver, who is a new candidate for the museum’s collection, pairs well with Lenz’s work and interests. Lenz’s winning painting for the competition was titled “Sam and the Perfect World.” It depicts his son, Sam, who has Down syndrome, in a Wisconsin field. In this highly realistic work, the sun shines brightly and green hills and fields seem to invite the viewer and Sam to explore the world beyond a fence that runs just behind him. Lenz is an admirer of Shriver because of her international role as the founder of Special Olympics; in addition, Sam is an active and enthusiastic Special Olympics athlete.

“This project is extremely meaningful to me because Mrs. Shriver has tirelessly advocated for people like Sam,” said Lenz. “She has led the world to be a more welcoming place for people with intellectual disabilities.”
This competition is made possible by the generosity of Virginia Outwin Boochever, whose gift fosters the acquisition of contemporary portraiture for the Portrait Gallery.

The jury process for the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2009 is under way. Finalists and winners will be presented in the second installment of the exhibition, which will be open from Oct. 23 through Aug. 22, 2010.

**Eunice Kennedy Shriver**

As executive vice president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation and founder and honorary chairperson of Special Olympics, Shriver has been a leader in the worldwide struggle to improve and enhance the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities for most of her life. She also serves on the board of directors of Best Buddies International, a nonprofit that enhances the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment.

Shriver has been recognized throughout the world for her advocacy and work. Included among her awards are the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award; the Legion of Honor; and the Prix de la Couronne Française. She holds 14 honorary degrees and was one of the first recipients of a sidewalk medallion on The Extra Mile Points of Light Volunteer Pathway in Washington, D.C.

Born in Brookline, Mass., the fifth of nine children of Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, Eunice Mary Kennedy received a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif.

**National Portrait Gallery**

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery tells the history of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists whose lives tell the American story.


###

**Note to editors:** Images of the work will be embargoed until 10:30 a.m. May 9. At that time, a release about the image, images and required caption and credit information may be downloaded from http://newsdesk.si.edu/photos/.