National Portrait Gallery Announces
2005 Paul Peck Presidential Award Winners
—Annual Awards Honor Presidential Service and Portrayal—

Ambassador Howard H. Baker Jr., former U.S. senator, and Hugh Sidey, presidential journalist, have been named as the recipients of the 2005 Paul Peck Presidential Awards presented by the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery. The $25,000 award and specially designed National Portrait Gallery medal honor individual excellence in presidential service and portrayal. Baker won the award for service to the presidency, and Sidey won for portrayal of the presidency.

The Paul Peck Presidential Awards were founded in 2002 and are the only awards in the United States to celebrate achievement in support of the presidency. They are named after Paul Peck, the National Portrait Gallery’s major individual donor, and are one of several presidential initiatives undertaken by the Gallery, which hosts one of the nation’s two official presidential portrait collections.

“I am proud to congratulate Ambassador Howard H. Baker and Hugh Sidey for serving this extraordinary office and increasing the public’s awareness of it,” said Marc Pachter, director of the National Portrait Gallery. “Their history of commitment to the presidency reminds all Americans of the critical role the office plays in our national life.”

Award for Service

The award for service to a president honors individuals in the executive branch of government and members of Congress who have served a president or in some way made a contribution to the office of the presidency. Officials from the current administration are not eligible. Past winners include Brent Scowcroft, Thomas R. Pickering and George Elsey.
Presidential Medal of Freedom winner Howard H. Baker Jr., 80, was the first republican senator ever popularly elected from Tennessee. Baker served three terms from 1967 to 1985 and was senate minority leader and later senate majority leader. President Ronald Reagan then tapped him to serve as chief of staff from 1987 to 1988. Baker was a regent of the Smithsonian from 1995 to 2001. He was appointed United States ambassador to Japan by President George W. Bush in 2001. Ambassador Baker retired in 2004, and in March 2005 he joined Citigroup as an advisor to senior management on international matters.

Baker’s distinguished career led to his Peck Presidential Award for service, noting his role as minority ranking member on the Senate Watergate Committee and his service to President Reagan as chief of staff during Reagan’s final years in office. In both cases, Baker was viewed as strengthening the institution of the presidency.

**Award for Portrayal**

The award for portrayal of a president is given to an individual who has depicted the presidency in either a visual or literary form. This winner could be a portrait artist in any medium, a journalist, a presidential biographer or a scholar. Past winners include scholar Richard E. Neustadt, photographer Diana Walker and C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb.

Hugh Sidey, 78, has written about the American presidency for more than 40 years—covering the presidencies from Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush. Sidey has written about presidents for Life and TIME magazines since Eisenhower’s U-2 crisis in 1960. During these years, he became one of the most knowledgeable experts on the presidency and the men who have held the office. He created TIME’s column “The Presidency” in 1966 and has written seven books on the subject. The award is in recognition of the fact that Sidey portrayed U.S. presidents in a fair and informative way for a very large audience.

**The Paul Peck Fund for Presidential Studies**

The winners will participate in two programs with high school students affiliated with The Junior Statesman Foundation and the Close Up Foundation. Friday, Oct. 28, John Milewski will interview Hugh Sidey, followed by a Q-and-A session with students from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va. The session will be broadcast at 7:30 p.m. on Close-Up on C-SPAN. National Portrait Gallery Director Marc Pachter will moderate town hall sessions with Sidey, Baker and mid-Atlantic students from Junior Statesmen of America on Saturday, Oct. 29, at the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Auditorium, Freer and Sackler Galleries.
“Freedom is life, and freedom is rooted in democracy,” Peck said. “These presidential awards were created to encourage Americans to be more committed to their civic engagement and reasoned voting.”

**The Nominating Process**

The nominating committee consists of 10 organizations that are devoted to the study of the American political system and are not associated institutionally or ideologically with any political party. Nominating institutions for this year’s award are the Center for the Study of the Presidency; the American Political Science Association; the White House Historical Association; Close-Up Foundation; the Junior Statesman Foundation; the National Coalition for History; the Portrait Society of America; the American Society of Portrait Artists; the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association.

A selection committee selects the winners each year. Former Presidents Jimmy Carter and George H. W. Bush are honorary co-chairmen of the committee, and members of the 2005 committee include David Gergen (chair), Betty Monkman, Robert Remini, Cokie Roberts, Robert Samuelson and Roger Wilkins.

**Background**

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery is currently closed to the public. The Portrait Gallery’s home in the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture is undergoing an extensive renovation and will re-open to the public in July 2006.

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