

# Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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**Phoenix Art Museum features ESPN's Wilbon and Cubs' Epstein at Luncheon of Champions**

*Annual luncheon joins arts and sports lovers to benefit museum exhibitions and education*

**PHOENIX (February 21, 2017)** – Phoenix Art Museum will present the fourth-annual Luncheon of Champions on March 24, 2017, at 11:30 am, featuring a candid conversation between legendary sports-journalist Mike Wilbon, host of ESPN's *Pardon the Interruption*, and Theo Epstein, president of baseball operations for the 2016 World Series Champion Chicago Cubs. The annual luncheon, which has historically celebrated the art of baseball, joins sports and art enthusiasts for an afternoon that benefits exhibitions and educational programming at Phoenix Art Museum. The two sports history-makers will bring to life their experiences at the top of their respective fields, with unique insights into what it means to be a champion.

"Phoenix Art Museum is pleased to host two extraordinary guests for the 2017 Luncheon of Champions," said Amada Cruz, the Museum's Sybil Harrington Director and CEO. "We are grateful, not only to Mr. Wilbon and Mr. Epstein for their support, but to each of our guests who attend the luncheon. Not only will they enjoy a unique opportunity to hear from these remarkable leaders in the sports world, but they will make a direct impact on the Museum's ability to open its doors to our diverse community."

The Museum began the Luncheon of Champions tradition in 2013, featuring then Commissioner of Baseball, Bud Selig, who returned again in 2015 as Commissioner Emeritus, along with Rob Manfred, the 10<sup>th</sup> Commissioner of Major League Baseball, and moderated by Bob Uecker, sportscaster, actor and comedian. In its history, the Luncheon of Champions has raised more than \$300,000 that directly benefits Phoenix Art Museum's exhibition and education funds. In appreciation of his many contributions, Bud Selig will be honored by the Museum at the March 24<sup>th</sup> Luncheon.

Along with a live conversation with speakers Epstein and Wilbon, admission to the Luncheon of Champions includes beer samples generously donated from the ever-popular Four Peaks Brewing Company, based in Tempe, Arizona. A ballpark-inspired menu from Santa Barbara Catering promises creative and tasty hors d'oeuvres and a fully plated lunch. At the conclusion of the event, Wilbon and Epstein will take questions from guests and will be available for photos. The ticket entry will also include free entry to *Samurai: Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection*, the Museum's special-engagement exhibition, featuring exquisite warrior regalia from one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Samurai armor in the world. A uniquely curated sports-themed art exhibition drawn from the Museum's collection will also be on view for guests to view during and after the event.

Individual tickets to the Luncheon of Champions are offered at \$300 each, with all proceeds directly benefiting the Museum. An additional ticket option of \$350 includes a one-year family

membership to Phoenix Art Museum, offering unlimited admission to the Museum all year long at a savings of \$40. Hosted table packages, which include admission to an exclusive meet-and-greet prior to the Luncheon with Wilbon and Epstein, begin at \$5,000 for a party of ten. To purchase tickets, visit [tickets.phxart.org](http://tickets.phxart.org), email [specialevents@phxart.org](mailto:specialevents@phxart.org) or call 602.257.2139. For press inquiries or to request interviews, contact the Museum's Press Office at 602.257.2105 or [press@phxart.org](mailto:press@phxart.org).

#### **About Theo Epstein, Chicago Cubs, President, Baseball Operations**

In 2016, Epstein led the Chicago Cubs to its first World Series title in 108 years, which marked his third world championship; he had previously helped the Boston Red Sox to World Series titles in 2004 and 2007 while he was General Manager with the team. Currently in his 26th season in Major League Baseball, Epstein enters his sixth season with The Cubs, where he has helped make more than 45 trades during his tenure. The team has also seen increased win totals every year, from 61 to 66 to 73 to 97 to 103 in 2016. In 2012, Epstein became the youngest General Manager in baseball history at the age of 28. Two years later, at age 30, he became the youngest General Manager to win a World Series. In 2009, Theo was named Executive of the Decade for baseball by *The Sporting News* and was third on the *Sports Illustrated* list of Top-10 GMs/Executives of the Decade in all sports.

#### **About Mike Wilbon, Sportscaster and TV Host, ESPN's *Pardon the Interruption***

Michael Wilbon is a co-host of ESPN's award winning show *Pardon The Interruption* and a contributor to ESPN/ABC coverage of the NBA. Previously, Wilbon worked for 30 years as a reporter and columnist for *The Washington Post*. Wilbon's columns in *The Post* and his commentary for ESPN deal as much with the issues of the day as they relate to what happens on the fields or courts. Since his career began in 1980, Wilbon edited two books on the *New York Times* best-seller list with Basketball Hall of Famer Charles Barkley. In 2009, Wilbon was honored by the National Association of Black Journalists with the organization's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2001 he was recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists, as the top sports columnist in America and has been inducted into both the D.C. Sports Hall of Fame and the Chicago Sports Hall of Fame.

#### **About Phoenix Art Museum**

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for more than 50 years and is the largest art museum in the Southwestern United States. In addition to an annual calendar of special exhibitions, Phoenix Art Museum's permanent collection galleries are drawn from more than 18,000 objects of modern and contemporary art, fashion design, and photography, as well as American, Asian, Latin American, and European art. Each month, the Museum hosts a wide variety of public programs, including lectures, performances, tours, workshops, and film screenings designed for audiences of all ages to enjoy.

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