

Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

MEDIA CONTACT:

Margaree Bigler, Communications Manager
602.257.2105 | margaree.bigler@phxart.org

Phoenix Art Museum welcomes living-legend Hank Aaron to 2018 Luncheon of Legends
Aaron joined by retired commissioner Bud Selig and ESPN's Mike Wilbon at annual luncheon benefiting art and education at Museum



PHOENIX (February 12, 2018) – Phoenix Art Museum will present the 2018 Luncheon of Legends on March 16, 2018, at 11:00 am, featuring a candid conversation between Baseball Hall-of-Famer Hank Aaron and Bud Selig, Commissioner Emeritus of Major League Baseball, along with guest emcee, Mike Wilbon of ESPN's *Pardon the Interruption*. Luncheon of Legends, which has historically celebrated the art of baseball, brings together sports and art enthusiasts for a special afternoon that raises funds for exhibitions and educational programs at Phoenix Art Museum. Aaron, who is considered one of the greatest players in baseball history, along with Selig, who is credited with guiding Major League Baseball to newfound popularity and success, will bring to life their experiences at the top of their prospective fields, with unique insights into what it means to be a leader and a legend. Tickets will be available for purchase beginning Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at tickets.phxart.org. Ticket details follows below.

“Phoenix Art Museum is honored to present our community of supporters with the rare opportunity to hear from living-legend Hank Aaron,” said Amada Cruz, the Museum’s Sybil Harrington Director and CEO. “We are grateful for the ongoing support and generosity of Mr. Selig, whose vision and volunteerism has helped make this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity possible, and we thank Mr. Aaron for his willingness to share his experiences and remarkable story with our Museum family.”

Aaron, who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982, played from 1954 to 1976. During his career, he collected more RBIs and extra-base hits than any other player in history and was named to the All-Star team for 21 consecutive years. In 1976, he retired as the all-time leader in career home runs, and although his home-run record was broken in 2007 by Barry Bonds, Aaron remains one of only three members of the 700-home-run club. In addition to his uncanny prowess on the field, Aaron has also made significant contributions as an activist, bringing awareness to issues regarding civil rights, courageously resisting discrimination, and speaking out on the limited representation of people of color in baseball management and ownership. Born Henry Louis Aaron in 1934 in Mobile, Alabama, Aaron first played in the segregated Negro Leagues before signing with the Milwaukee Braves; he was one of the last players to play in both the Negro and Major leagues.

In honor of Mr. Aaron’s illustrious record and his impact on the world of sports, social equality, and American culture, the event, previously known as Luncheon of Champions, has been aptly renamed Luncheon of Legends. Now in its fifth year, it first featured Selig, then Commissioner of Baseball, in 2013. Selig returned in 2016 as Commissioner

Emeritus and was joined by Rob Manfred, the tenth Commissioner of Major League Baseball, with moderator Bob Uecker, legendary sportscaster, actor and comedian. In 2017, the Luncheon featured a conversation with ESPN's Wilbon and Theo Epstein, president of baseball operations for the 2016 World Series Champions Chicago Cubs.

"It is truly a privilege to bring speakers of such dynamic caliber to Phoenix Art Museum," said David Rousseau, president of SRP and a member of the Museum's Board of Trustees, who serves as the chair of the 2018 Luncheon of Legends. "Not only will our guests enjoy the unforgettable experience of hearing from these legends of the sports world, but they have a chance to make a direct impact on the Museum's ability to open its doors to everyone in our community." In its history, the Luncheon has raised nearly \$500,000 in funds that directly benefit the Museum's exhibition and education programs.

In addition to the live conversation between speakers Aaron and Selig, the Luncheon will be emceed by highly respected sports-journalist legend Mike Wilbon, host of ESPN's *Pardon the Interruption* and *New York Times*-best-selling author. The event will feature a ball-park inspired menu from Santa Barbara Catering. At the conclusion of the event, Aaron and Selig will take questions from guests and will be available for photos.

TICKETS:

Individual tickets to Luncheon of Legends are \$300 each, with all proceeds directly benefiting the Museum. Hosted table packages, which include admission for two to an exclusive meet-and-greet with Aaron, Selig, and Wilbon prior to the Luncheon, begin at \$5,000 for a party of ten Luncheon guests. To purchase tickets, visit tickets.phxart.org. For other event inquiries, email 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 margaree.bigler@phxart.org.

[Media images are linked here.](#)

About Hank Aaron

Henry Louis "Hank" Aaron is a former Major League Baseball player who retired as the all-time leader in career home runs after playing from 1954 to 1976 with the Milwaukee/Atlanta Braves and the Milwaukee Brewers. During his career, he collected more RBIs and extra-base hits than any player in history. For 21 straight years, he was named an All-Star, and for 20 consecutive years, he slugged at least 20 home runs or more. Fourteen times he hit over .300 in a major league season, and eight times he hit 40 home runs or more. On April 8, 1974, he conquered one of the most hallowed records in sports—Babe Ruth's home run record—by knocking his 715th home run. He ended his career with a .305 batting average, 755 home runs, 3,771 hits, 2,297 RBIs, three Gold Gloves, a World Series championship, and an MVP award. Aaron's home-run record has since been broken by Barry Bonds, but he remains one of just three members of the 700-home run club.

After playing, Aaron returned to the Braves to serve as vice president of player development and in 1989 was named senior vice president of the club and assistant to the president. In 1982, he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, with a 97.8% yes vote on all ballots cast, the second most of all time, behind only Ty Cobb. In 1999, Major League Baseball announced the creation of the Hank Aaron Award in honor of the 25th anniversary of Aaron breaking Ruth's record. The award is presented annually to the best hitter in Major League Baseball. In 1999, he was named to Major League Baseball's All-Century Team. In 2002, he was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush. — *Biography courtesy of ESPN.com*

About Bud Selig

Bud Selig was the ninth Commissioner of Major League Baseball, named by unanimous vote by all 30 Major League ball club owners in 1998, after serving in an acting role for six years. Selig oversaw baseball through the 1994 strike; the introduction of the wild card, interleague play; and the merger of the National and American leagues under the Office of the Commissioner. He is credited with the financial turnaround of baseball during his tenure, with a 400% revenue increase for the MLB and annual record-breaking attendance. In 2017, Selig was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

About Mike Wilbon

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 was a reporter and columnist for *The Washington Post* for 30 years. Since his career began in 1980, Wilbon has edited two books on *The New York Times* best-seller list with basketball Hall-of-Famer Charles Barkley. In 2001, he was recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists as the top sports columnist in America, and in 2009, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Black Journalists. Wilbon 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. Critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the Museum's permanent collection of more than 18,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents festivals, a comprehensive film program, live performances and educational programs designed to enlighten, entertain and stimulate visitors of all ages. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum's landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit phxart.org, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at 602.257.1222.

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