



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Rhythm & Blues Foundation Announces 15th Pioneer Awards
Show Co-Hosts**

**Music Legends Dionne Warwick, Bonnie Raitt and Jerry Butler
to Share September 9 Hosting Duties at the Kimmel Center in
Philadelphia in Celebration of the Foundation's 20th Year**

**Chaka Khan, Bill Withers, Kool & the Gang, Donny Hathaway and More to
be Honored in Star-Studded Gala**

Philadelphia, PA (August) - Music legends **Dionne Warwick, Bonnie Raitt** and **Jerry Butler** will co-host the **Rhythm & Blues Foundation's** star-studded **15th Pioneer Awards** gala. The event, to be held at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia on September 9, 2008, will pay homage to **Chaka Khan** with the Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award. In addition, **Bill Withers, Teena Marie**, and singer-songwriter **Sugar Pie DeSanto** will receive the Foundation's Individual Artist Award; **The Whispers** and **Kool & the Gang** will receive the Foundation's Group Artists Award; Motown session players the **Funk Brothers** will receive the Foundation's Sidemen Award; Soul legend **Donny Hathaway** will posthumously receive a Legacy Award in recognition of his influential output in the 1970s; and **Al Bell**, former president of two renowned record labels, Stax Records and Motown Records, will be given the Foundation's Leadership Award.

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Warwick, Butler, and Raitt have deep ties to the Rhythm & Blues Foundation, and in recognition of the importance of the Foundation's mission and their 20th anniversary, they have graciously given their time to co-host the Pioneer Awards show. **Bonnie Raitt**, one of the top slide guitarists in Blues history, as well as a 9-time Grammy Award winner, was a founding Director of the Foundation. **Jerry Butler**, an original member of soul group **The Impressions** and a highly successful R&B/Pop solo artist, served as Chairman of the Foundation for many years, and is now Chairman Emeritus of the Foundation as well as a past Pioneer Award honoree. **Dionne Warwick**, a 5-time Grammy winner, has served as a Director of the Foundation, and received the Foundation's coveted Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003.

The 2008 Pioneer Awards Event Co-Chairs **Octavius "Ted" Reid III, Sr.** Vice President/Wealth Advisor in the Global Wealth Management for Morgan Stanley, and Judy **Tint**, entertainment attorney and consultant in New York City, both long-time members of the Board of Directors of the Rhythm & Blues Foundation, expressed their enthusiasm about the Pioneer Awards and the participation of this year's co-hosts. **Reid** commented: "As an ardent supporter of the Rhythm & Blues Foundation, I am proud of this year's Pioneer Awards list of honorees. And our co-hosts this year add immeasurable class to the proceedings. I believe this year's event will go down as one of the best in its 20-year history." **Tint** added: "Our honorees, co-hosts and presenters represent rhythm and blues at its finest. The R&B Foundation has supported musicians in need and provided professional opportunities to artists who are still at the top of their game. The Pioneer Awards is a show like none other, honoring our legends and celebrating the rich past of R&B while looking toward its future. This year's event promises to be the most amazing 'family reunion'."

Patricia Wilson Aden, Executive of the Rhythm & Blues Foundation, commented on the Foundation's 20th anniversary: "Over the year's, the active support Jerry Butler, Dionne Warwick and Bonnie Raitt has been enormously beneficial to the work of the Rhythm & Blues Foundation. Its only fitting that they serve as co-hosts as we celebrate our accomplishments over the past twenty years and prepare to meet the challenges that will come in the next twenty years."

For more information about the Rhythm & Blues Foundation and to purchase tickets for the 2008 Pioneer Awards, please visit www.rhythmblues.org or call 215-568-1080.

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ABOUT THE RHYTHM & BLUES FOUNDATION

Founded in 1988, the Rhythm & Blues Foundation is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit service organization. It is dedicated to the historical and cultural preservation of Rhythm & Blues music. The Foundation provides programs and emergency medical and financial assistance to support R&B artists of the 1940's through 1970's. Founders of the organization included Ahmet Ertegun, Ruth Brown, Ray Charles, Dan Akroyd and many other luminaries who appreciate the value of R&B to America. The Foundation brings generations together by offering Rhythm & Blues-themed educational and community outreach programs to the public. www.rhythmblues.org