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20TH ANNUAL GLAAD MEDIA AWARDS IN NYC WRAP-UP

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 - 12:52pm by Rich Ferraro, Vice President of Communications

A big thank you to everyone who attended the 20th Annual GLAAD Media Awards presented by IBM in New York City on March 28! More than 1,500 people attended the event presented by Prudential, which honored outstanding representations of LGBT people in media. GLAAD's silent and live auctions raised an estimated \$110,000 for GLAAD's culture changing and media advocacy work.

The evening began with a reception at the Marriott Marquis where guests perused silent and live auction items. Meanwhile, the red carpet welcomed over 120 media outlets to photograph and interview special guests and honorees.



Media outlets including *Access Hollywood*, *Entertainment Tonight* and *Reuters* were on hand to raise visibility for support for the LGBT community from A-list celebrities in attendance. LGBT media outlets including *The Advocate*, *AfterElton.com*, *Queerty.com* and *OUTTAKE* also took the opportunity interview special guests about their views on marriage equality.

The red carpet was turned white - where staff, guests and celebrities including Clay Aiken, Phil Donahue, S. Epatha Merkerson, T.R. Knight and Jane Velez- Mitchell wore white knots in support of marriage equality (<http://www.whiteknot.org/>).

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The 20th Annual Media Awards kicked off with a hysterical monologue from comedian Kate Clinton who poked fun at Pastor Rick Warren and continued with an opening montage of media images from 2008 that had the crowd laughing with clips from television and film and moved many tears with its incorporation of media coverage of Proposition 8.



Jennifer Holliday shines at the 20th Annual GLAAD Media Awards.

Jennifer Holliday was one of the first of many standing ovations for her performance of "I Believe I Can Fly." Openly lesbian actress Cherry Jones presented a Special Recognition Award to Phil Donahue, who was the honoree at the first GLAAD Media Awards in 1990.

"It's unbelievable to think about the power and the warp speed of this revolution," Donahue said during his acceptance. "Twenty years ago when I proudly accepted the first GLAAD Media Award...it was a very small crowd. There are more photographers here tonight than there were people then.... And now, we look up in 2009, and [the LGBT community] is popular. The majority of the people in the nation agree with us. Our job now is to summon these people to stand up and say so out loud. To tell them to join us. To march the lavender line with us down Fifth Avenue, and to remind them, when they do join us, they're going to meet a lot of nice people."

Actress Stockard Channing also presented a Special Recognition Award to Sirius OutQ radio personalities Romaine Patterson and Derek Hartley on behalf of Sirius XM for their two hour documentary, *The Laramie Project, 10 Years Later*. Patterson thanked intern and producer Katie Castellano for her work on the documentary.

Judith Light and LGBT advocate David Mixner provided a moving look back at

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the last 20 years of media images, moving us from coverage of HIV/AIDS to some of the groundbreaking television moments to coverage of marriage equality this past year.

Keith Olbermann received a standing ovation from the crowd when accepting the award for Outstanding TV Journalism Segment for "Special Comment: Gay Marriage is a Question of Love" which aired on **Countdown with Keith Olbermann** on MSNBC. Olbermann cited that his presence in the media had an advisor of John McCain change his stance on marriage equality. "One down," Olbermann said- eliciting laughs and applause from the crowd.



The new GLAAD Media Awards Statuette which was unveiled at the New York event, designed by Society Awards

Twenty-year old Donald Smith began a tribute to GLAAD President Neil Giuliano. Smith was a teenager during Giuliano's tenure as President of Tempe, Arizona and remarked that Giuliano's visibility had been an inspiration in Smith's coming out.

Openly gay actor T.R. Knight presented the Vito Russo Award to Suze Orman, personal finance expert and host of CNBC's *The Suze Orman Show*. The Vito Russo Award is presented to an openly lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender media professional who has made a significant difference in promoting equal rights for the LGBT community.

"I want every single one of you in this room to take note of what corporations put their time and money behind gays, behind lesbians - behind you," Orman said accepting her award. "Do you want to continue to give your money to people in corporations that oppress us, that keep us down? Or do you want to give your money to the corporations who can help us rise and change what needs to be changed in the United States of America today." Orman continued, "I ask you to honor those corporations not only with your support but with your money as well. We can do this - and here's how you're going to do it. You are going to think about every single penny you spend from this day forward. And the only think I ask of you is to spend it and invest it in those companies that invest in you."

Openly gay singer Clay Aiken presented the Excellence in Media Award to close personal friend Tyra Banks, who was honored for her strong commitment to educating the public about the lives of gay and transgender people on her talk show, *The Tyra Banks Show*, and on her reality series, *America's Next Top Model*. The Excellence in Media Award is presented to individuals who, through their work, have increased the visibility and understanding of the LGBT community in the media.

"[The LGBT community] empowered me," Banks said in her acceptance speech. "And in turn, when I finally had a platform, and a power, and a voice - no longer just a face, but a voice - to get across the points and the messages that were important to me, I brought you along with me. Because you embraced me and now I embrace you in front of millions to show how beautiful you are, how absolutely amazing you are, how giving you are. And I will continue to do that as long as I have a platform. I will continue to get the message out about gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people."

Holliday returned to the stage to close the evening with a disco version of "And I Am Telling You, I'm Not Going" from *Dreamgirls*.

The Celebrity After-Party, where attendees applauded included media images from 2008 included special guest DJ Junior Vasquez and a special cocktail from ABSOLUT to celebrate the 20th anniversary of their partnership with GLAAD.

GLAAD thanks over 100 corporate partners for their generous support in making the event a great success and a night to remember.

We hope to see you at the GLAAD Media Awards in [Los Angeles](#) on April 18 where we are honoring Kathy Griffin, Bishop Gene Robinson and The L Word. Additional talent: Jessica Alba, Dustin Lance Black; Balthazar Getty; Megan Mullally; Alan Cumming; Gus Van Sant; George Takei; Bruno Tonioli; Robert Gant, Peter Paige, Thea Gill, Michelle Clunie; Wilson Cruz; and Chad Allen. A third ceremony takes place in [San Francisco](#) on May 9 honoring Chad Allen with Special Guests Wilson Cruz, Robert Gant, Jason Lewis and Suze Orman.



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Submitted by *Stuff Queer Peo...* on April 1, 2009

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Submitted by *The Bilerico Project* on April 4, 2009

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