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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fifteen Local “Women in Media” to be Honored at Women and Girls Foundation Gala November 6, 2010

Event will honor artists, editors, reporters, producers, filmmakers, bloggers, and professionals in the media world who are raising awareness and shaping the coverage of women and girls’ stories in our region.

PITTSBURGH—The Women and Girls Foundation (WGF) will celebrate “Women in Media” this November with a Gala Award Ceremony honoring women in our region leading the way in print, radio, PR, TV, in film and on the internet, and those utilizing multiple media to promote and amplify the voices of women and girls. These honorees are making our region a better place for women and girls to thrive through their advocacy and influence on our region’s media outlets. WGF’s annual gala celebrating “Women in Media,” sponsored by UPMC, and Chaired by WQED Multimedia incoming CEO Deborah Acklin, will be held on November 6, 2010, at the August Wilson Center for African-American Culture in Downtown Pittsburgh, from 6 – 10 p.m. The ceremony will be emceed by Laverne Baker Hotep, Patrice King Brown, Eleanor Schano and Sally Wiggin, and will include a Keynote Address by filmmaker, Abigail Disney.

In 2005, WGF pledged to honor a select group of women every year who are engaged in dynamic work in exciting and challenging career fields in Southwestern Pennsylvania. These annual events honor women innovators and inspire young women to see the range of career options available to them in a myriad of fields. Through honoring these women, WGF tangibly demonstrates how women are having leadership impact in shaping the Southwest Pennsylvania region. Previous WGF events include “Women in Science,” “Women in the Material World,” “Women in Sports,” and in 2009, WGF celebrated its 5th Anniversary by honoring “Women Shaping the Law” at the August Wilson Center.

“As the role of media in our lives is changing, so is the emerging role of women in media. From Katie Couric and Rachel Maddow on the national scene to Pittsburgh’s own Deborah Acklin and Virginia

Montanez, women are making an impact as leaders and innovators in traditional and new media that is very exciting,” said Heather Arnet, Chief Executive Officer of the Women and Girls Foundation.

WGF’s “Women in Media” event will feature a keynote address by award winning filmmaker and granddaughter of media tycoon Walt Disney, Abigail Disney. Disney’s first film, the feature-length documentary *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, which won the Best Documentary Feature award at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2008, tells the inspirational story of the women of Liberia and their successful efforts to bring peace to their broken nation after decades of destructive civil war. Disney will give a keynote address at the awards ceremony on the power of media and women’s voices to bring peace to the world, and her film will be screened after the awards ceremony. Disney has spoken internationally to a wide variety of audiences on the changing face of philanthropy, women’s leadership and the importance of living a life of engaged and intelligent volunteerism.

“I am so proud to chair this event, honoring so many brilliant trailblazers, and helping to raise support for a critical resource in our community, that I care about deeply. We owe it to our girls to constantly inspire them with new options and new heroes,” said Event Chair and WGF Board member, Deborah Acklin.

At the November 6, 2010 Award Ceremony fourteen “Women in Media” will be honored, along with a special Award of Distinction, the first in WGF’s history, to be presented to blogger and writer Virginia Montanez for her innovative and brilliant use of social media to raise awareness of the need for local political reform, and her critical role in rallying public support to save the orphans of the BRESMA orphanage in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, earlier this year.

In addition to Virginia Montanez’s Award of Distinction, the Women in Media Honorees include:

Cynthia Closkey, President, Big Big Design, Co-Founder, PodCamp Pittsburgh, and Developer, iTwixie.com

Elaine Effort, Radio Newscaster, KQV Radio

Vanessa German, Multi-media artist, writer, sculptor, performer and photographer

Sally Kalson, Columnist, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Lauren Lawley Head, Editor, Pittsburgh Business Times

Beverly Morrow-Jones, Executive Director of Marketing, VisitPittsburgh

Debbie Norrell, Lifestyles Columnist, New Pittsburgh Courier

Mary Robb Jackson, News Anchor, KDKA-TV

Cindy Skrzycki, Journalism Professor, University of Pittsburgh

Heather Starr-Fiedler, Creator, PittsburghMom.com, New Media Professor, Point Park University

Heide Waldbaum, Technical Production Manager for the film *AVATAR*, Visiting Professor, Carnegie Mellon University Robotics Institute

Shaina Wallace, Hip Hop Artist, High School Student at Westinghouse High School

Carolyn Wean, Retired Media Executive

Rosemary Welsch, Radio DJ, WYEP

The “Women in Media” Host Committee includes:

Deborah L. Acklin, WQED Multimedia CEO and WGF Board Member, Women in Media Host Committee Chair

Betsy Benson, Pittsburgh Magazine

Patrice King Brown, KDKA

Tracey DeAngelo, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Bridgette Driver, FedEx Ground

Laverne Baker Hotep, Center for Victims of Violent Crime

Dawn Keezer, Pittsburgh Film Office

Joyce Kossol, Entrepreneur and WGF Board Member

Mary C. Leonard, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Lindsay Patross, IHeartPGH.com

Eleanor Schano, Pittsburgh Television Personality

Laura Staniland, Civics Lab and Logoco Media

Sally Wiggin, WTAE

For more information about WGF and the upcoming celebration of “Women in Media,” visit www.wgfp.org or call 412-434-4883.

About Women and Girls Foundation

The Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania (WGF) is an independent community-based foundation serving eleven counties in Southwest Pennsylvania. Our mission is to achieve equity for women and girls in the region. The Women and Girls Foundation promotes social change in our region by addressing fundamental social inequalities and raising the awareness of these inequities to the media, to voters, to legislators, and corporate and non-profit decision makers. By serving as an independent and clear voice, the foundation strives to bring together women and men in our region to work together to find solutions to create sustained equity for all of its citizens. For more information, visit www.wgfp.org or call 412.434.4883.

About UPMC

UPMC is an \$8 billion integrated global health enterprise headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is one of the leading nonprofit health systems in the United States. As western Pennsylvania's largest employer, with almost 50,000 employees, UPMC is transforming the economy of the region into one based on medicine, research, and technology. By integrating 20 hospitals, 400 doctors' offices and outpatient sites, long-term care facilities, and a major health insurance services division, and in collaboration with its academic partner, the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences, UPMC has advanced the quality and efficiency of health care and developed internationally renowned programs in transplantation, cancer, neurosurgery, psychiatry, orthopaedics, and sports medicine, among others. UPMC is commercializing its medical and technological expertise by nurturing new companies, developing strategic business relationships with some of the world's leading multinational corporations, and expanding into international markets, including Italy, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Japan. For more information visit www.UPMC.com. For more information about the UPMC Dignity and Respect campaign, visit <http://www.upmc.com/aboutupmc/CommunityCitizenship/inclusion/Pages/inclusion-focus.aspx>.

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