



TEN INNOVATORS TO RECEIVE ROLEX AWARDS FOR ENTERPRISE IN NOVEMBER TO IMPLEMENT GROUNDBREAKING PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD

Since 1976, the Rolex Awards Have Funded Pioneering Projects in Science, Medicine, Technology, Exploration, the Environment, and Cultural Heritage

June 25, 2008 – The Rolex Awards for Enterprise, which for more than 30 years have supported innovative projects benefiting communities around the world, will be presented to ten pioneering individuals this fall. Founded in 1976 to champion a spirit of enterprise and advance groundbreaking work in science, technology and the environment, among other areas, the Rolex Awards are presented every two years. Five Rolex Laureates will each receive \$100,000 in project support, and will be honored in a ceremony in Dubai on November 18, 2008. Five Associate Laureates will each receive \$50,000 and will be honored in their home countries. All ten will also receive a Rolex chronometer. This year's honorees were selected from nearly 1,500 entries from over 120 countries.

The Rolex Awards provide funds to launch new ventures or further ongoing projects. They support pioneers with original ideas who typically work outside the mainstream, and often have limited access to traditional funding sources. Over the years, Award recipients have come from six continents and have ranged from a French anthropologist to a Senegalese mechanical engineer. Addressing a broad range of global challenges – from wildlife and habitat preservation, to preserving ancient traditions, to providing water, food, medical supplies and education for impoverished communities – candidates must show how they can turn a new idea into a functioning project, and how, through initiative and drive, they will achieve their project goals.

“Rolex is proud to invest in innovative solutions for the 21st century, and, with every new series, we are inspired by the ingenuity and commitment shared by the recipients of the Awards for Enterprise,” said Rebecca Irvin, head of the Rolex Awards Secretariat. “We look forward to announcing the winners of the 2008 Awards in Dubai in November and to seeing their work fuel positive change around the world.”

The Rolex Awards for Enterprise were initiated by the late André J. Heiniger, former chairman of Rolex, in 1976 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the company's greatest technical achievement, the waterproof Oyster chronometer. In 2002, Patrick Heiniger, CEO of Rolex, launched the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, a global program that pairs emerging artists with masters in the visual arts, dance, film, literature, music, and theater for a year of intensive collaboration. Both programs advance the work of individuals who exemplify the vision, innovation, and excellence that define the Rolex brand.

Rolex Awards Selection Process

Following a rigorous evaluation process, Rolex Laureates and Associate Laureates are chosen by the Selection Committee, an independent, voluntary jury of international experts in a range of disciplines. In addition to evaluating a candidate's spirit of enterprise, the jury selects the

winning projects on the basis of their feasibility and potential for success; their originality; and the prospect for lasting impact on the surrounding community and society as a whole.

A new jury, chaired by Patrick Heiniger, is convened for each series of the Rolex Awards. Past committee members have included explorer Sir Edmund Hillary, Nobel Laureate Leo Esaki, editor of *National Geographic* magazine William Graves, neurologist and astronaut Roberta Bondar, and volcanologist Haroun Tazieff. The Awards are open to anyone of any age, nationality, or background whose project meets the program criteria, and are given to support pioneering new ventures, not to reward past achievements.

The Selection Committee members for the 2008 Awards are: **Dr. Vikram Akula**, founder and CEO of SKS Microfinance, based in India and the United States; **Etienne Bourgois**, head of a French clothing company and expedition leader, **Professor Denise Bradley**, president of the Australian College of Educators; **Dr. Geh Min**, Singaporean ophthalmologist, environmentalist and president of the Nature Society of Singapore; **Professor Farkhonda Hassan**, Egyptian geologist and professor at the American University in Cairo; **Dr. Rodrigo Jordán**, educator and explorer from Chile; **Yolanda Kakabadse**, Ecuadorian environmentalist and champion of sustainable development; **Dr. Phil Nuytten**, Canadian pioneer of the commercial diving industry; **Dr. Ivo Pitanguy**, plastic surgeon and director of the Ivo Pitanguy Clinic and Institute in Brazil; **Dr. Anatoly M. Sagalevitch**, Russian oceanologist and head of the Shirshov Institute of Oceanology's Laboratory of Manned Submersibles; **Professor Emil Salim**, Professor of Economics at the University of Indonesia; and **Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan**, director of the Battelle Centre for Math and Science Education Policy at Ohio State University and former NASA astronaut.

The Impact of 30+ Years of Rolex Awards

As of November, 2008, 110 Rolex Awards for Enterprise will have been awarded to Laureates and Associate Laureates from 41 countries, implementing projects in over 63 countries. Projects have included: protecting endangered species, from the tiny seahorse to the giant whale, and habitats, from the Amazon rainforest to coastal ecosystems in Thailand; reintroducing traditional agriculture in the Andes; preserving essential food sources in Africa; reviving traditional boat-building in Bangladesh; educating nomadic children in Siberia; recording traditional Mexican folk music; producing low-cost water containers for impoverished communities; and supplying reliable, low-cost lighting in developing countries.

The impact of these projects continues worldwide. Examples of ongoing Laureate work include:

- **Pilai Poonswad, 2006 Rolex Laureate in the Environment**, used her Award to engage rural communities in saving threatened hornbills and their rainforest habitat in Thailand. In 2007, she held camps for more than 200 children throughout Thailand, and, currently, she is working on educational exchanges between children in the largely Muslim southern region and the Buddhist northeastern region of Chaiyaphum Province.
- **Michel André, 2002 Rolex Laureate in Technology and Innovation**, is continuing work on a breakthrough system to prevent whales from colliding with ships. Now at the forefront of a rapidly developing scientific frontier, he is also working to raise awareness about human noise pollution in the world's oceans.
- **Adli Qudsi, 1998 Rolex Associate Laureate in Cultural Heritage**, will complete his multi-year effort to preserve and restore the Old City of Aleppo in his native Syria by 2010, creating a valuable model for revitalizing the world's most ancient cities. Former residents are returning to Aleppo as investors, and many middle-class residents are opting to stay.
- **Aldo Lo Curto, 1993 Rolex Laureate in Science and Medicine**, who describes himself as a "voluntary traveling doctor," continues his campaign to bring medicine and health

education to indigenous people on several continents with an extended journey, in 2008, to Mongolia – his twelfth humanitarian visit to the region.

- **Johan Gjeffen Reinhard, 1987 Rolex Laureate in Exploration and Discovery**, continues to explore sacred sites around the world. In 1995, he discovered the remains of a 500-year-old Andean woman, and, more recently, he has conducted underwater research in Mexico, leading to important discoveries of Aztec artifacts.

Rolex Philanthropy

Since the company's founding a century ago, Rolex has established a tradition of support for individual excellence and achievement around the globe. Through its two primary philanthropic programs, the Awards for Enterprise and the Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, Rolex fosters innovation in science, exploration, conservation and the arts. Since 1976, the Rolex Awards for Enterprise have provided direct investment to 100 individuals and projects that have advanced critical work worldwide. Building on a legacy of supporting culture that dates back to the 1970s, when the company established unique relationships with many of the greatest living artists, Rolex launched the Arts Initiative in 2002 to help further the next generation of artistic excellence. Artists and advisors from more than 40 countries have participated. The master artists who have served as Rolex Mentors are John Baldessari, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Sir Colin Davis, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, William Forsythe, Stephen Frears, Sir Peter Hall, David Hockney, Rebecca Horn, Jiří Kylián, Toni Morrison, Mira Nair, Youssou N'Dour, Jessye Norman, Martin Scorsese, Álvaro Siza, Wole Soyinka, Julie Taymor, Saburo Teshigawara, Kate Valk, Mario Vargas Llosa, Robert Wilson, and Pinchas Zukerman.

For more information on the Rolex Awards for Enterprise, visit: rolexawards.com

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