

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Charlene Guyer, 215-665-1920

**GESU CELEBRATES “15 YEARS WITH 15 STARS” AT ART MUSEUM ON MAY 1**

**Ralph S. Saul and John J.F. “Jay” Sherrerd will be honored by nationally renowned Gesu School with Gesu Spirit Medal at fundraising gala showcasing dreams and talents of rising city stars**

PHILADELPHIA (February 2008) – The hopes and talents of Philadelphia’s rising stars and those who inspire them will light up the night on May 1 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art as “Gesu Celebrates 15 Years with 15 Stars,” a fundraising gala for nationally renowned Gesu School.

Co-chaired by **Judy and Scott Beaumont** and **Sue and Bill Shea**, the gala will raise funds to support scholarships and features talented Gesu alumni, rising young city performers and exceptionally gifted Gesu students all headed for success. During this momentous evening, the annual Gesu Spirit Medal will be presented to two special stars, accomplished executive **Ralph S. Saul** and philanthropic financier **John J.F. “Jay” Sherrerd**, for illuminating countless lives through their generosity and commitment to the North Philadelphia independent Catholic school.

“Ralph and Jay have put as much heart and dedication into sustaining and improving this school as they have into their successful careers, much to the benefit of the thousands of children Gesu educates each year,” says Gesu School President and CEO **Christine S. Beck**. “We are thrilled to honor them and all of our many ‘stars’ as we raise the funds necessary to give our children hope for a shining future.”

Helping Gesu meet its mission to provide a high-quality education to children living in often difficult circumstances has been the hallmark of this year’s Spirit Medal co-recipients, who have both served for many years on the Gesu School Board of Trustees. Saul, a former board chairman for CIGNA Corporation, CEO of INA Corporation and president of the American Stock Exchange, has taken on many leadership roles for Gesu, including chairing the \$4.1 million “Children Succeeding” campaign and co-chairing the \$12 million “Building for Tomorrow” capital campaign with Sherrerd and Gesu Board of Trustees Chair **Win Churchill**. Sherrerd, who co-founded an investment management firm and serves on the boards of many corporations, is a Gesu advisory trustee who created the school’s annual fund and was a key architect of its growing endowment.

Patrons and sponsors are getting ready to enjoy a festive preview party March 30 hosted by Scott Beaumont, CEO of Lilly Pulitzer, at the company's King of Prussia headquarters. As organizers ratchet the enthusiasm higher and higher for the gala, which includes cocktails, dinner and dessert, they hope to exceed the success of the school's previous "Gesu on Broadway" gala featuring *The Phantom of the Opera*'s Davis Gaines.

Since 1993, Gesu School has become a model for success in inner-city education. When the parish closed 15 years ago, Gesu's leaders took a leap of faith to keep the school open as an independent Catholic school serving 450 mostly non-Catholic children in grades pre-K through 8. Without selective admissions, more than 90% of Gesu's graduates complete high school in four years.

For more information, call 215-763-9077 or visit [www.gesuschool.org/15stars.htm](http://www.gesuschool.org/15stars.htm).

###