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For immediate release

## **Final push is on for fundraising campaign to create sculpture honouring Canadian jazz great Oscar Peterson**

Canadian luminaries among biggest donors so far

**Ottawa (Canada)** — Canada's National Arts Centre (NAC) has begun the final push to reach its fundraising goal to create of a life-sized bronze sculpture of the late Canadian jazz legend Oscar Peterson.

In addition to **Prime Minister Stephen Harper** and his wife **Laureen**, the **Hon. Bob Rae** and his wife **Arlene Perly Rae**, radio station **JAZZ.FM91** in Toronto one of the first donors, Canadian jazz great **Oliver Jones**, national TV news anchor **Lloyd Robertson and his wife Nancy**, businessman **Harry Rosen and his wife Evelyn**, , and more than 100 donors from across Canada, the United States and Great Britain have donated to the project so far, including the following:

- **The Slight Family Charitable Foundation** – The Slight family and its patriarch Allan Slight (“a big fan” of Oscar Peterson, according to his son Gary) founded Standard Broadcasting and has supported Canadian recording artists for decades.
- **The Hazel McCallion Foundation for Arts, Culture and Heritage** – created by the longtime Mayor of Mississauga, a city where Oscar Peterson lived for decades.
- **TD Bank Financial Group** not only donated to the Oscar Peterson statue, but also sponsors all of the major jazz festivals across Canada.

The Oscar Peterson statue created by renowned Canadian artist Ruth Abernethy will be installed outside the NAC building, on the corner of Elgin St. and Albert St. just steps from Parliament Hill and the Canadian War Memorial. The unveiling is set to take place at 1 p.m. on June 30<sup>th</sup> as part of Canada Day celebrations. Montreal broadcaster and musician Gregory Charles will host, and the Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir will sing.

Members of the Oscar Peterson National Committee include: Mr. Bob Rae, the Hon. William Davis, the Hon. Roy McMurtry, the Hon. Tommy Banks, Kelly Peterson, Gail Asper, Brian

Robertson, Denise Donlon, Peter Herrndorf, Tim Armstrong, Harvey Glatt, Valerie Pringle, and Ross Porter.

“Members of the Oscar Peterson National Committee wish to thank all of the people, organizations and businesses who have supported this wonderful project so far,” said Mr. Herrndorf, President and CEO of the National Arts Centre. “The success of the fundraising is a testament to Oscar’s brilliance as a musician and his tremendous achievement as a Canadian.”

Oscar Peterson (1925-2007) emerged from the Montréal working class neighbourhood known as Little Burgundy to become one of the world’s greatest piano virtuosos. His more than 200 recordings place him in the international jazz pantheon with none other than Duke Ellington, who called him “the maharajah of the keyboard.” His compositions include the famous “Canadiana Suite” and “Hymn to Freedom.”

With this sculpture, Canada’s National Arts Centre proudly commemorates the masterful contribution Oscar Peterson made during his 65- year career as a musician, recording artist, composer and mentor.

Ruth Abernethy, one of Canada’s most prominent sculptors, has been commissioned to create the sculpture, which depicts Oscar Peterson seated on a bench alongside a grand piano. Following the interactive theme of Ms. Abernethy’s memorial statue to Glenn Gould outside the CBC building in downtown Toronto, the tribute sculpture of Oscar Peterson will encourage passers-by to sit with the musician and “play a duet.”

Donations can be made online at [www.nac-cna.ca/oscar](http://www.nac-cna.ca/oscar) or by sending a cheque in the name of the National Arts Centre Foundation - Oscar Peterson to the following address:

National Arts Centre Foundation - Oscar Peterson  
P.O. Box 1534, Station B  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5W1

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