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CONTACT: Brian Connolly
212-935-3960

\$25,000 GRANT WILL FUND TOURS, LECTURE ON STATEN ISLAND HISTORY AND DESTINATIONS

The Richmond County Savings Foundation has awarded the Municipal Art Society a \$25,000 grant to develop and conduct a series of six bus, walking and boat tours of Staten Island in 2007, with an inaugural lecture on the borough's history by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Mike Wallace. The tour series, *Staten Island: Beyond the Boat and the Bridge*, is designed to attract those who know little about the island beyond the Staten Island Ferry and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

"Staten Island is the least-known of the city's five boroughs," said Kent Barwick, MAS president. "Much more than just the starting point of the New York City Marathon, it is home to a varied and fascinating history. In 1776, it was the site of the country's first peace conference; Sailor's Snug Harbor was the nation's first secular charity; Frederic Law Olmsted wrote his first regional plan for the island. Sites associated with these and other events, organizations and individuals will be visited during this series."

Mike Wallace, co-author of *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*, will deliver his lecture at the Staten Island Economic Development Conference on Tuesday, April 24, 2007. The tour series will begin with an overview bus tour of the island the following weekend. Other tours will visit the South Shore and several of the borough's outstanding churches, as well as Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Ft. Wadsworth. The final tour will focus on Staten Island's Italian heritage.

"This deeply appreciated grant will also enable MAS tour leaders to research Staten Island's history as well as scout locations and routes," said Kent Barwick. "Once a tour is developed, it will become part of the tour leader's repertoire. In addition to MAS tour leaders, the grant will also fund the participation of local historians and other resource people, so that tour participants will experience Staten Island from diverse perspectives."

The first MAS walking tour took place in 1956 — 50 years ago. In 1958, its first bus tour covered Staten Island. It was arranged with the assistance of borough historian Loring McMillen, who then served on the Historic Structures Committee at MAS. In the last few years, the MAS has sponsored tours of St. George, Fresh Kills Park, and in celebration of the centennial of the Staten Island Ferry.

The Municipal Art Society of New York is a private, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote a more livable city. Since 1893, the MAS has worked to enrich the culture, neighborhoods and physical design of New York City. It advocates for excellence in urban design and planning, contemporary architecture, historic preservation and public art.

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