

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Voting Rules Yield Eclectic Winners at 58th Primetime Emmys

24 Carries the Day, *The Office* Clocks In

Los Angeles, Aug. 27, 2006 – Accolades for both first-time nominees and veterans, as well as moving tributes to iconic producers were among the highlights of the 58th Annual Primetime Emmy Awards, hosted by Conan O'Brien.

The Fox drama *24* was named Outstanding Drama Series for the first time after five nominations in the category, and in its second season, the NBC series *The Office*, a U.S. adaptation of the hit British series of the same name, was named Outstanding Comedy Series. For the fourth year in a row, Outstanding Reality Competition series went to the CBS series *The Amazing Race* and Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Series went to Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*.

For the sixth straight year, HBO led the night with nine awards, including four for the historical epic *Elizabeth I* and three for the film *The Girl in the Café*. Among broadcast networks, NBC led with six, including writing and directing nods for the comedy *My Name Is Earl*.

As he did last year, co-executive producer Ken Ehrlich, a veteran of more than two dozen Grammy Awards shows, infused the Emmys with rousing musical performances. He also included a pair of stirring, star-studded salutes to Dick Clark and Aaron Spelling.

The 58th Annual Primetime Emmys marked the start of a bold initiative within the Television Academy's nomination process designed to open up and invigorate the awards, enlarge the pool of candidates, make the awards more relevant to the quickly changing tastes of TV viewers and create a new entertainment paradigm in which the results can no longer be taken for granted.

O'Brien, back as host for the first time since 2002 (the last time NBC, which airs *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, broadcast the ceremony), made his entrance in a pre-taped sequence that began with a plane crash that stranded him on the island from the ABC hit *Lost*, took the show's mysterious hatch to *The Office*, wandered into a tense *24* situation, underwent a quick medical evaluation by Hugh Laurie of the Fox hospital drama *House*, found himself animated on the Comedy Central show *South Park*, and then endured an awkward confrontation by *Dateline NBC* correspondent Chris Hansen. Finally arriving at the Shrine Auditorium, he opened the night to enthusiastic applause.

O'Brien began with a monologue in which he joked about the length of the Emmys broadcast, which, since it was airing on NBC, meant "halfway through the show, the show will be cancelled."

After other barbs aimed at Mel Gibson, HBO's *The Sopranos* and the news that Emmy

gift bags will be taxed by the IRS, O'Brien remarked on the fact that NBC, which was the number-one network the last time he hosted, is now, as he put it, "in the top five." He then burst into song — complete with a straw hat, cane and an energetic team of dancers and singers — with a rendition of the show-stopping tune "Trouble," from the Broadway musical *The Music Man*, with reworked lyrics that needled the network's recent performance. It was fun, unexpected and the audience loved it.

Without a pause for a commercial interruption, O'Brien introduced Ellen Pompeo and Patrick Dempsey to hand out the award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series, which went to *Will & Grace* co-star Megan Mullally, her seventh consecutive nomination and second win.

"I never cried on national television for *Will & Grace*," said Mullally — holding back tears — when she accepted her award.

Julia Louis-Dreyfus, showing little of the nerves that must have been getting under her skin waiting for the Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series, teamed with Sean Hayes to present the Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series. After joking affectionately about the new nominating process, Dreyfus and Hayes announced Alan Alda of *The West Wing*, who was not present, as the winner.

Alda's award marked a milestone for *West Wing*. As the show's 26th win of its run, it broke a record for most Emmys ever for a drama series, surpassing *Hill Street Blues*.

When O'Brien returned to the stage, he told the crowd that there are no real consequences for running over, "until now." With that, TV legend Bob Newhart was wheeled onto the stage in an airtight container with "exactly three hours of air." Like a scene from a top comedy show, Newhart gave his best anxiety look, tried briefly to get out, and was wheeled back off stage.

Father-and-son nominees Martin and Charlie Sheen were up next to hand out the statuette for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series. For the second consecutive year, the award went to Blythe Danner of Showtime's now-canceled *Huff*, about an L.A. psychiatrist and his dysfunctional family.

Flustered as only an accomplished actress can be, Danner thanked various people involved in the show. She then added, "Let's get serious," and gently chided Showtime for canceling the show.

Jamie Pressly, half of a Gandhi/Blondie 50-1 long shot bet running online (the other half being Ben Kingsley, star of the movie about the Indian leader and nominated for an Emmy for his role in the *Elizabeth I* miniseries), showed up, bright, beautiful and blonde, along with her *My Name Is Earl* costar Jason Lee to present Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series,

To generous applause, Jeremy Piven, who plays an unhinged Hollywood agent in the HBO's *Entourage*, won the award. Accepting the prize, Piven recalled, "When I was 17, my first agent told me I wouldn't work until I was in my mid-forties. I thought, 'What am I going to do for 17 years? Do I become a fluffer?'" Then, turning serious, the veteran performer thanked his mother, who was in the audience, and then, holding his award aloft and gazing heavenward, paid tribute to his late father, revered Chicago-area acting teacher Byrne Piven.

In another comical bit, O'Brien appeared briefly to show how the award-giving and -accepting procedure might be sped up in the future, introduced Christopher Meloni riding a Segway, snatching up his (non-existent) award while giving an abbreviated acceptance speech.

Actors Presenters Dennis Haysbert and William Petersen led to another surprise when they gave out the award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Miniseries or Movie to first-time nominee Kelly Macdonald. The Scottish performer thanked the film's writer, Richard Curtis, who was unable to attend the ceremony because he was at his ailing father's bedside.

Already, it seemed, the new nominating process had reaped the diverse results that had been intended, mixing surprises like Danner and Macdonald with nods to longtime Emmy veterans like Alda for *West Wing*.

In a quick, laugh-getting gag, O'Brien mentioned that the ceremony was being broadcast on NBC's sister network, Spanish-language Telemundo. He then quickly donned a black moustache and embarked on a rapid Spanish patter. The unexpected stunt caught the audience by surprise, and they loved it.

Heidi Klum, John Lithgow and Jeffrey Tambor appeared to give the award for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Series, which for the fourth consecutive year went to *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*.

Leslie Jordan and Cloris Leachman, recipients at last week's Creative Arts Emmys of the awards for Outstanding Guest Actor and Actress in a Comedy Series, respectively, took the podium to present two awards, Outstanding Director and Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series or Comedy Program. The first went to Mark Buckland for *My Name Is Earl* and the second to Greg Garcia, also for *My Name Is Earl*.

In one of the most amusing speeches of the night, Garcia mentioned three people he did not want to thank — his 8th grade social studies teacher, his boss when he was an production underling and ended with God: "I'm sure you're responsible in some way, but you took my hair" quipped the balding Garcia.

The eagerly anticipated Dick Clark tribute had the audience roaring for more after *American Idol*'s Simon Cowell played the good judge for once, introducing clips of Clark as a youthful disc jockey on his old black-and-white show, doing more than just playing

records for kids to dance to, but adding a real personal touch, talking with the kids, then introducing ABBA, Donna Summer, Madonna, Run DMC, ending with, “Won’t you come and join us, right here, on *Bandstand*.” The studious-looking Cowell continued introducing clips showing Clark’s extraordinary versatility — New Year’s shows, country music, bloopers and practical shows, game shows like *The Ten Million Dollar Pyramid*, hosting *Live Aid*, and even a guest appearance on David Letterman’s talk show.

When Clark appeared via video link, the looked made hearts bump. His speech slurred slightly by a stroke in 2004, he talked about accomplishing his childhood dream — to be in show business. “Everybody should have their dreams come true,” he ended, and then he introduced “my friend, Barry Manilow.”

And Manilow delivered, raising memories and breaking hearts with an energetic performance of “Bandstand Boogie,” *American Bandstand*’s theme song, with a modest but very effective group of dancers recreating the special intimacy and excitement that was Dick Clark’s gift to the music he loved. If *American Bandstand* remains a relic of the past, Manilow made it come vividly alive once again.

Next up, Tina Fey (“Emmy winner”) and Tracy Morgan (“home owner”) took the stage to give the award for Outstanding Individual Performance in a Variety or Music Program. Fittingly, the statuette went to Barry Manilow — the second Emmy of his career. Possibly the only entertainer who says “Holy mackerel!” when he wins, Manilow mentioned Dick Clark, public television (for whom the show was taped), family, friends and colleagues in a whirlwind acceptance speech that could be a model for winners uncertain of how to do the job.

Patricia Clarkson and Christian Clemenson, Creative Arts recipients of Outstanding Guest Actor and Actress in a Drama Series, respectively, then presented Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series to Terence Winter of *The Sopranos* and Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series to Jon Cassar, for *24*.

Mariska Hargitay and Tom Selleck gave the award for Supporting Actor in a Miniseries or Movie to Jeremy Irons (his second career Emmy) for *Elizabeth I*.

Howie Mandel and Megan Mullally presented Outstanding Directing for a Variety Music or Comedy Program to Louis J. Horvitz for directing the 78th Annual Academy Awards show — from the control booth of the Emmys show he was currently directing!

Outstanding Writing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program went to *The Daily Show* — again for the fourth consecutive time.

Hugh Laurie and Helen Mirren (Brits who, O’Brien said, have given us representative government, Shakespeare and half the Chunnel) presented Outstanding Lead Actor in a Miniseries or Movie to Andre Braugher for his performance in the FX production *Thief*. The Emmy was the second of Braugher’s career.

Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series was presented by Matthew Perry and Bradley Whitford of NBC's upcoming fall series *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*. The winner, for the third time, was Tony Shalhoub of the USA series *Monk*. In the press tent, a grateful but, in his own words, "semicomatose" Shalhoub admitted obliquely that he thought *The Office's* Steve Carell would prevail.

Next, Candice Bergen introduced Television Academy chairman Dick Askin, who in turn introduced the tribute to the late Aaron Spelling, describing him as a man who understood his audience and entertained them, year after year.

Stephen Collins, flanked by Joan Collins and Heather Locklear, then explained how "this surprisingly gentle mogul" made television "that tasted good. No one did guilty pleasure better than Aaron." Locklear and Collins shared memories as well.

After some simple words from Spelling himself, a rapid-fire sequence of clips showed why Spelling is counted such an immense force in the annals of television: the blockbuster series which started conversations in households and offices around the country for years and years and years.

In an unexpected, crowd-pleasing turn, Kate Jackson, Farrah Fawcett and Jaclyn Smith, the original *Charlie's Angels* appeared onstage, looking spectacular paying tribute to Spelling's artistic gifts and, as Kate Jackson said, his "ability to sense chemistry." Each of the three stars, in their individual ways, and with tears welling up in their eyes, talked about Spelling the man, the leader, the star maker, the friend.

Eva Longoria and James Woods presented the award for Outstanding Made for Television Movie to HBO's *The Girl in the Café*. The came Stephen Colbert and Jon Stewart to present Outstanding Reality Competition Program, for the fourth consecutive year, to CBS's *The Amazing Race*.

Omar Epps and Katherine Heigl took the stage to hand out the award for Outstanding Directing for a Miniseries, Movie or Dramatic Special, which went to Tom Hooper for *Elizabeth I*. They also presented Outstanding Writing for a Miniseries, Movie or Dramatic Special, which went to Richard Curtis for *The Girl in the Café*.

Sopranos stars Edie Falco and James Gandolfini expressed their gratitude to our service personnel overseas, then presented the statuette for Outstanding Miniseries to *Elizabeth I*.

The honors for *Elizabeth I* continued when Felicity Huffman and Kiefer Sutherland gave the award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Miniseries or Movie to the production's star, Helen Mirren, who garnered laughs when, alluding to her precipitous shoes, "My great triumph was not falling ass over tit as I walked up here."

Calista Flockhart and Craig Ferguson traded quips prior to handing announcing Mariska Hargitay as Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series. "When I named my son August," said a radiant Hargitay, who recently had her first baby, "I had no idea the

month would end like this!”

Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series went to Julia Louis-Dreyfus for the CBS program *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, which was presented by Victor Garber and Tyra Banks. In an acceptance speech marked by humor and near-tears, Louis-Dreyfus alluded to breaking the so-called “*Seinfeld* curse” with her prize.

Ray Liotta and Virginia Madsen followed to present the award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series to *24*’s Kiefer Sutherland — his first Emmy among eight nominations for the role of beleaguered government agent Jack Bauer — which drew appreciative applause from the audience. “Every once in a while, you have an experience that shows you have been given too much. This is one of those experiences,” he said graciously.

O’Brien then explained the mystery of how Bob Newhart was able to survive more than his allotted three hours of oxygen. (Hint: The solution remains unclear, but, O’Brien reported, more than 50% of the “thousands” of telephone callers wanted Newhart to live). That left the great Newhart to announce the winner for Outstanding Comedy Series to be *The Office*, which went to NBC’s deft adaptation of the British original.

For the final prize of the night, Annette Bening announced Outstanding Drama Series, which went to Fox’s high-adrenaline hit *24*, its first victory in the category.

As O’Brien and presenters mingled onstage and backstage, preparing to go to whatever celebrations lay in store, the show ended with O’Brien saying, “I had a blast, I hope you enjoyed yourself!” which most in the audience certainly would have echoed.