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Former Charleston, SC Mayor Joe Riley to Receive 2017 Global Vision Award

COLUMBIA, S.C. (August 1, 2017)—The Columbia World Affairs Council is pleased to announce that Joseph Patrick Riley Jr., former Mayor of Charleston, South Carolina, will receive the 2017 Global Vision Award. Mayor Riley will be honored at a black-tie gala at the Columbia Marriott on Wednesday, November 8, 2017. This is the 24th year the Columbia World Affairs Council has presented the award to a leader whose contributions have made a significant impact on South Carolina to help project the state globally.

“Joe Riley was ‘America’s Mayor’ for more than forty years,” says former Columbia Mayor and Columbia World Affairs Council Board of Directors Chair Bob Coble. “Mayor Riley was a national and international leader on urban issues for decades. He is a friend and mentor to most of the current and former mayors of our country.”

Mayor Riley is widely considered one of the most visionary and highly effective governmental leaders in America for his over 40 years of service to the city of Charleston. He served in the South Carolina General Assembly from 1968 to 1974 and is one of the longest-serving mayors in U.S. history. He held the office for ten terms, from 1975 to 2016. He has received global acclaim for his management in rebuilding Charleston after Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and more recently for his compassionate leadership in following the massacre at Mother Emanuel AME Church in 2015.

Mayor Riley has enhanced South Carolina’s global image and presence. Guided by his vision, his administration is credited with economic development strategies that have given Charleston a global reputation as one of the most desirable places to do business, live, and visit. The city’s King Street is recognized in the top ten best shopping streets in America, along with Fifth Avenue and Rodeo Drive.

According to a College of Charleston School of Business 2015-16 tourism report, visitors to the Charleston area in the past year generated a total economic impact of over \$3.7 billion. This quality of life has attracted significant international investments to the state – from bringing Spoleto Festival USA to Charleston to attracting Boeing and, most recently, Volvo Cars and Mercedes-Benz. While helping to rank Charleston as the number one city in the U.S. and second in the world as rated by

readers of Travel & Leisure Magazine, Mayor Riley also helped establish Charleston as one of the nation's up-and-coming information technology and digital centers.

Mayor Riley's support of the International African American Museum, slated to open in 2020 at Gadsden's Wharf on the historic Charleston Harbor, has been instrumental in establishing an institution of lasting international importance. This final legacy of his career will attract visitors to our state from around the world for decades to come.

In January of 2016, he joined the faculty of The Citadel as the first occupant of an endowed Professorship of American Government & Public Policy created in his honor with the mission of documenting and teaching lessons of principled, bipartisan, and effective leadership in pursuit of excellence for the public good.

The Columbia World Affairs Council was established in 1993 to raise awareness of international activities in the Midlands, help people connect across the region, bring distinguished speakers and foreign diplomats to Columbia to address international issues, and create a bridge to build new international relationships. The Council administers the sister-city program for the City of Columbia and is a member of the Washington-based World Affairs Councils of America and Sister Cities International.

The Global Vision Award was established in 1994, and the first recipient was Gov. Carroll A. Campbell. Last year, the honor went to former SC Governor, now US Ambassador Nikki Haley. For more information about the Global Vision Award, please visit columbiaworldaffairs.org.

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