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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
**The HUMANITAS Prize to be honored at YWCA Santa Monica / Westside
2010 Focus Awards Gala,
Saturday, May 8 at The Skirball Cultural Center**

On Saturday, May 8, 2010 the HUMANITAS Prize will be honored at The Skirball Cultural Center at the YWCA Santa Monica / Westside Focus Awards Gala. **Kirk Ellis** (*John Adams*, *Anne Frank*), **Winnie Holzman** (*My So-Called Life*, *Wicked*), **Carol Mendelsohn** (*CSI*) and **Paris Qualles** (*A Raisin in the Sun*) will be representing HUMANITAS. Each will be honored at the *Media, Perception and Power: Connection and Responsibility* event for creating positive, inspirational female characters in the media. Emmy Award-winning executive producer/writer, **Ali LeRoi** (*Everybody Hates Chris*) will serve as Master of Ceremonies. **Marshall Herskovitz** (*thirtysomething*, *Once and Again*) is a presenter. This marks the first time in HUMANITAS' 36-year history that the organization has been honored for its influence on television and film.

The HUMANITAS Prize was created to honor screenwriters who affirm the dignity of the human person, probe the meaning of life, and enlighten the use of human freedom. These writers' stories reveal common humanity so that love may come to permeate the human family and help liberate, enrich and unify society.

Kirk Ellis won two Emmys, a Golden Globe, a Writers Guild of America Award, a Peabody award and the HUMANITAS Prize for his work on *John Adams* starring Paul Giamatti and Laura Linney. Kirk wrote and co-executive produced the seven-part HBO miniseries, which is based on David McCullough's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography. The miniseries scored a record 23 nominations; second only to *Roots* in Emmy history, and won a record breaking 13 Emmys in total, as well as four Golden Globe awards.

Winnie Holzman was the creator and co-executive producer of the acclaimed one-hour television drama, *My So-Called Life*, for which she received an Emmy nomination. As part of the writing staff of the memorable television drama *thirtysomething*, Winnie wrote nine episodes and received a WGA nomination. More recently she executive produced the award winning drama series *Once And Again*, which starred Sela Ward. She is also

the co-author, with composer/lyricist Stephen Schwartz, of the hit musical *Wicked*, currently playing on Broadway, in San Francisco, on tour, and in London, Tokyo, Stuttgart and Melbourne.

Carol Mendelsohn has been the Showrunner/Executive Producer on *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* since the pilot episode. This fall, the show began its tenth season as the number-one scripted drama series on television. She is also a Co-Creator/Executive Producer of *CSI: Miami* and *CSI: NY*. As a producer, she has been nominated for multiple Emmys, WGA Awards, Golden Globes, Producers Guild Awards and the prestigious Edgar Allen Poe Award. Additionally, she is a three-time People's Choice Award winner.

Paris Qualles' 3-Hour ABC Network Special, *A Raisin in the Sun* was nominated for an Emmy Award as Best Television Movie, an Image Award for Writing, and was the winner of The HUMANITAS Prize for Writing in the Sundance Feature Film category, a winner of a Christopher Award as well as an Image Award for Outstanding Television Movie of the year. His episodic television credits include *China Beach*, *Equal Justice*; *Lois & Clark*, *The New Adventures of Superman*; *Quantum Leap*, *Law & Order*; *Seaquest*, *Amen*, *Trials of Rosie O'Neil*, *The Heights*, *MANTIS*, *The Cape*, and pilots for CBS & FOX.

The Focus Awards is the YWCA Santa Monica /Westside's principal fundraising event, which helps to support our many free community programs including:

- **Transitional Housing and Education**, for young women exiting the foster care system,
- **Encore**, free exercise programs and support for women with cancer,
- **Girl Central**, free empowerment program for middle-school girls, including leadership, computer literacy, financial literacy and dance

For more information, contact The HUMANITAS Prize at (310) 454-8769 or Soozie@humanitasprize.org

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