



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“A QUEEN AND TWO PRINCESSES”:**

**HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, PRINCESS MICHAEL OF KENT SPEAKING ON QUEEN MARIE-ANTOINETTE AT SPECIAL BENEFIT IN PALM BEACH, ACCOMPANIED BY FRENCH HERITAGE SOCIETY PRESIDENT PRINCESS MARIE-SOL DE LA TOUR D’AUVERGNE**

New York, NY (January 22, 2007) - Her Royal Highness, Princess Michael of Kent, wife of the first cousin of Queen Elizabeth II, and author of two history books and a frequent international lecturer, will speak on “Marie Antoinette: A Glimpse of Her Life,” followed by a cake and champagne reception, as part of the highlight events of *Palm Beach / America’s International Fine Art & Antique Fair* on February 4, 2007. The event is a benefit for French Heritage Society.

Event Chairman Diana Ecclestone will welcome FHS President Princess Marie-Sol de La Tour d’Auvergne from Paris, who will introduce Her Royal Highness. She will make reference to the renowned *Portrait of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France* by Louise Vigée LeBrun, on loan to the Fair from the New Orleans Museum of Art. Proceeds of the event will benefit the restoration of the museum’s Bestoff Sculpture Garden, as part of French Heritage Society’s Katrina Heritage Rescue Fund.

Special honored guests will include Madame Jean-David Levitte, wife of the Ambassador of France to the U.S., and Dr. Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel, Director General of the Museum of Versailles.

A cake, portraying Queen Marie Antoinette, will be the centerpiece of a photo opportunity with Her Royal Highness Princess Michael of Kent and Princess Marie-Sol de La Tour d’Auvergne.

In addition, two English textbooks, which were presented to Marie Antoinette by the King of Spain, will be displayed at the event.

French Heritage Society members from across the country are expected to attend the event, including: Mr. and Mrs. Henry Darlington (New York, NY); Mrs. Peter I.C. Knowles II (Richmond, VA); and many others. E. John Bullard, the Montine McDaniel Freeman Director at the New Orleans Museum of Art and Fair Director Dr. Michael Mezzatesta also will attend.

E. John Bullard, the Montine McDaniel Freeman Director at the New Orleans Museum of Art, acknowledged French Heritage Society’s contribution as “an important factor in the restoration of the Sculpture Garden’s beautiful, natural environment, which provided intimate spaces and ‘outdoor galleries’ for the individual sculptures, many of which are by French masters.” Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans on August 29, 2005, closing the museum for six months, and

causing approximately \$3 million in damage to the Sculpture Garden. With the assistance of much reduced staff, along with volunteers and members of the Oregon National Guard, the Sculpture Garden was reopened on December 10, 2005, to provide a place of solace and inspiration for those citizens returning to New Orleans. Since its opening in 2003, the five acre Sculpture Garden has been free to the public.

The *Portrait of Marie Antoinette* is the second autographed version (the first is now at Versailles) and was commissioned by Charles Philippe, Comte d'Artois (1757-1836), youngest brother of Louis XVI, who later reigned as Charles X, the last Bourbon King of France.

French Heritage Society (FHS) is an American not-for-profit, 501(c) (3), tax-exempt, charitable organization. It was founded in 1982 in order to help assure survival of the architectural patrimony of France for future generations, and includes attention to the rich French legacy in America. Over its 25 years, the organization has grown to encompass 15 Chapters across the United States and one in Paris, French Heritage Society has contributed to over 400 restoration grants and provided more than 10 million dollars, including matching funds, to projects throughout France, as well as to those which reflect France's historic influence in the United States. FHS has also provided more than 250 educational grants in both countries, sponsoring exchanges for students, architects, artisans, and museum curators.

French Heritage Society will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in France next October, paying tribute to the friendship and enduring ties between the United States and France, and commemorating the special anniversaries of American founding fathers Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin, as well as Lafayette. An exclusive trip has been organized that will feature privileged access to some of the country's most beautiful, private estates hosted by their owners, as well as some of the finest cuisine and wines, and will culminate in a grand Gala and Ball at Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte.

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