



# NEWS RELEASE

DISCUS is the trade association representing producers and marketers of distilled spirits sold in the United States.

Website: <http://www.distilledspirits.org>

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## **GEORGE WASHINGTON SPIRITS SOCIETY HONORS FOUR INDUCTEES AT MOUNT VERNON CELEBRATION**

MOUNT VERNON, VA – The George Washington Spirits Society inducted four new members at an industry heritage celebration last night at Historic Mount Vernon, the Distilled Spirits Council announced.

The 2007 Inductees are: U.S. Representative James Clyburn (D-S.C., Majority Whip); Baroness Jean Coussins, former Chief Executive of the Portman Group; Thomas J. Donohue, President and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; and Robert Epstein, President of Horizon Beverage Group and Chairman of Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America.

“The George Washington Spirits Society recognizes distinguished individuals who best exemplify the outstanding qualities exhibited by our nation’s first President in his life, his business enterprises, and his service to his country,” said Distilled Spirits Council President Peter H. Cressy.

In addition, the Council made a special presentation in honor of William Wirtz, former owner of the Chicago Blackhawks and founder of the Wirtz Beverage Group, who passed away September 26, 2007.

The honorees were inducted into the George Washington Spirits Society, created in 2002, during a special reception and dinner at Mount Vernon hosted by the Distilled Spirits Council and the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America. Attended by more than 700 guests including legislators, industry leaders and the media, the evening was expected to raise more than \$300,000 to support the educational programs of Historic Mount Vernon.

The event featured an auction of rare American whiskeys, including a limited edition bottle of the first whiskey distilled, aged and bottled at the reconstructed George Washington’s Distillery at Mount Vernon, Virginia. The special bottle, signed by former President George H.W. Bush, highlights the distillery’s presidential connection as well as the cultural heritage of American whiskey.

The auction also featured commemorative bottles of George Washington’s Distillery Vatted American Whiskey, a blend of America’s best-known Bourbons and whiskeys, vatted, aged and hand-bottled on the grounds of Mount Vernon.

Each honoree was inducted as “Guardian of His Spirit” and presented a medal made through an antique process using burnished silver over pewter, featuring an image of George Washington with the words “Heritage, Responsibility and Integrity” on one side and a replica of George Washington’s copper pot still on the other side.

The inductees were selected by the Board of Trustees of the George Washington Spirits Society, which is made up of representatives of America’s leading distillers and Historic Mount Vernon.

## **THE 2007 INDUCTEES INTO THE GEORGE WASHINGTON SPIRITS SOCIETY:**

**U.S. Representative James E. Clyburn** (D-S.C., Majority Whip), *has distinguished himself as an extraordinary state and national leader. Clyburn has been remarkably successful as an advocate for social justice and civil rights for over 50 years. His support of education, migrant workers and human rights has been recognized by 16 honorary degrees from distinguished colleges and universities around the country. As a member of Congress from the state of South Carolina, Clyburn has provided brilliant national leadership as President of his freshman class, Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and as a member of the important Appropriations Committee. Most impressively, he was elected Majority Whip, the third ranking position in the U.S. House of Representatives, for the 110th Congress.*

**Baroness Jean Coussins**, *former Chief Executive of the Portman Group, has distinguished herself as an outstanding leader of the beverage alcohol industry throughout the United Kingdom and the world community. During her tenure as CEO of the Portman Group, Lady Coussins effectively advocated for a reduction in the misuse of beverage alcohol by the consumer and for responsible marketing and advertising by industry. A long time advocate for social justice, Lady Coussins was a Director of the Commission for Racial Equality and is a highly respected consultant for corporate strategies on social responsibility. She serves as a member of the governing body of Newnham College and was appointed to the British House of Lords in April 2007.*

**Thomas J. Donohue**, *President and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, has distinguished himself by his remarkable leadership of the nation’s business community, his successful advocacy of a strong U.S. economy and his dedicated support of education, legal reform and world trade. In support of a strong U.S. economy, Donahue has successfully advocated for major tax cuts, sensible environmental regulations and increased funding for transportation infrastructure. He has been a leader in reducing trade barriers, winning new free trade agreements and fighting protectionism. Donahue’s public service efforts have been equally impressive. He is a member of the President’s Council of the 21st Century Workforce, President’s Advisory Committee for trade, policy and negotiations. He is the President of the Center for International Private Enterprise and serves on the Board of Marymount University.*

**Robert Epstein**, *President of the Horizon Beverage Group, has distinguished himself by his dedicated and outstanding leadership of the distilled spirits industry and by his remarkable contributions to his state and his community. As President of Horizon Beverage Group and as Chairman of Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America, Epstein has been a successful advocate for the beverage alcohol industry and for social responsibility. Epstein has been remarkably active in numerous Massachusetts' civic and charitable endeavors particularly Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and has served as president and or trustee for many of these organizations. He is a generous philanthropist.*