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For Immediate Release

## SUNSHINE Awards™ Launches Membership Program in the U.S. Businesses and Members to Benefit - Positive Reaction from Community

**Teaneck, New Jersey, USA, 11 September, 2000** .....The SUNSHINE Awards™ organization today issued the following statement from the Chairman and Founder of the SUNSHINE Awards™, Gilman T. Figaro, Sr:

"It is with great pleasure that today the SUNSHINE Awards™ officially launches its general membership program, in conjunction with the SUNSHINE Awards™ Business Partner Advantage Program (SABPAP) here in the United States. For the past 12 years, the SUNSHINE Awards™ has enjoyed the support and encouragement of the Caribbean community here in the United States and across the Diaspora. The establishment of our membership program is a way for us to share many exciting opportunities and benefits with our many loyal supporters and sponsors.

"The SUNSHINE Awards™ membership program gives participants the opportunity to receive discounts from participating businesses in and outside of their communities. We are currently establishing partnership links with international, national and community businesses, under the SUNSHINE Awards™ Business Partner Advantage Program. These include airlines, car rental services, restaurants, hotels and record stores. This will be a joint endeavor in which there will be mutual benefits for the businesses concerned and for consumers, who happen to have a SUNSHINE Awards™ membership card. An additional benefit, which will be offered to members, is a special discount for tickets to various SUNSHINE Awards events held throughout the year. To mark the beginning of the new millennium, the membership fee for the year 2000 is being waived.

"Our membership program creates a wonderful opportunity for participating businesses to increase their sale potential as card bearing SUNSHINE Awards™ members will naturally prefer to transact their business with companies which offer them the benefits of discounts. In addition, companies enrolled in the SUNSHINE Awards™ Business Partner Advantage Program will also be listed on the SUNSHINE Awards™ web site."

Reactions to this new initiative have been very positive: Dr. Holis (Chalkdust) Liverpool, researcher, historian and calypsonian: "This is a very positive step. The SUNSHINE Awards™ needs to open up to more people ...". Grenville Straker, owner of Straker World Music Store, Brooklyn: "The membership program is a very good idea. This can go a long way to promote the SUNSHINE Awards™ and I think it's also very good for the music industry". Patricia Bennett, NY State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance: "Sounds Cool! It is a really good idea. So many more people will get to know about the SUNSHINE Awards™". Lee Cave, a graphic

artist from New Jersey: "I think this is great because the SUNSHINE Awards™, besides being very entertaining and informative, takes you back culturally. It's also very supportive of the islands, not just with the music but, for example, their student program, which recognizes students from the islands for academic excellence. The SUNSHINE Awards™ is the best put-together Caribbean show I have seen in New York, as well as in Trinidad. You are never left bored for one minute. This membership program is a great way to carry the Awards program forward." Carl Holder, owner of Carl Holder & Co., a music distribution business in Queens which specializes in Caribbean music: "It's a great idea, one which encompasses all the other art forms, as well as people in the business community. It will give people a sense of belonging because they know that through their membership in the SUNSHINE Awards program, they will be able to get discounts from various businesses. I really must commend Gil for staying so long with the SUNSHINE Awards™ and showing that Caribbean music can get recognition here in the United States." Sybil Chester, Manager, Corporate Affairs, Schieffelin & Somerset: "Great idea! One that both members and organizers of the SUNSHINE Awards will greatly benefit from in the long run. It's also kind of unique coming out of the Caribbean community." Optometrist, Desmond Edwards of New Jersey: "I could never understand why it took so long for this to happen. It not only makes the SUNSHINE Awards™ available on an everyday basis, but it also makes it easier for Gil to get information out to the public. I certainly respect and commend him for taking on the responsibility of actually doing something for our culture. Most people tend to talk but never do anything. It takes someone like Gil, an individual with insight, to actually do it."

The SUNSHINE Awards™ organization is also very excited about this new program. We see it as one of the ways by which we can establish a closer and more meaningful line of communication with the many people who have supported us over the years, and with all lovers of Caribbean arts and culture. We are also excited about being able to assist the many businesses, which have been our sponsors over the years, by creating this opportunity for them to further enhance their growth potential.

Membership forms may be obtained by contacting the SUNSHINE Awards™ Office, Tel: (201) 836-0799, Fax: (201) 836-4440, or by logging on to the SUNSHINE Awards™ web site at [www.sunshineawards.com](http://www.sunshineawards.com).