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Bryn Mawr College to honor rocker Patti Smith

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Patti Smith, 2007 (c) Edward Mapplethorpe

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Bryn Mawr, Pa – September 27, 2012 – Today Bryn Mawr College’s Director of the Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center Katherine Rowe announced that Patti Smith, an acclaimed musician, writer, performer and visual artist, will receive the 2013 Katharine Hepburn Medal. The Katharine Hepburn Medal recognizes women who change their worlds: those whose lives, work and contributions embody the intelligence, drive and independence of the four-time Oscar winner. Award recipients are chosen on the basis of their commitment and contributions to the Hepburn women’s greatest passions – the arts, civic engagement and women’s health.

“Bryn Mawr College is proud to honor Patti Smith with our 2013 Hepburn Medal. She was a trailblazer in the male-dominated world of rock and roll, and conveys enormous passion and continues to transform herself throughout her artistic journey, which resonates deeply with the Bryn Mawr College community,” said Bryn Mawr College President Dr. Jane McAuliffe. “At Bryn Mawr we encourage our students to strive to be their authentic selves, find passion in their lives and use that to transform their futures, and Patti Smith embodies this through and through.”

Ms. Smith has produced a body of work whose influence branches out through generations, across disciplines, and around the world. She is a poet, writer, singer, songwriter, photographer and fine artist. Blazing onto the music scene in the mid-70s, Smith forged a reputation as one of the decade's first visionary artists -- merging poetry and rock in vital new ways. Her 1975 debut album, *Horses*, is routinely ranked as one of the greatest albums of all time. In 2007, she was inducted into the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. Her accomplishments also include accolades for her poetry and her memoir *Just Kids*, which won the 2010 National Book Award for Non-Fiction.

“When Bryn Mawr College and the Hepburn Center approached me about receiving this award I enthusiastically accepted without hesitation,” said Ms. Smith. “Bryn Mawr is helping shape the futures of young women and providing them with the tools to be dominant forces in our society. The Hepburn Center commemorates two women who had this same passion to make a difference and always blazed their own path, so to be recognized by Bryn Mawr College’s Hepburn Center to receive the Hepburn Medal is truly an honor.”

The Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center memorializes Hepburn and her mother, an early feminist activist who was also named Katharine Houghton Hepburn, with programs focusing on the arts and theatre, civic engagement, and women's health. The Hepburn Center is the only organization authorized by the Hepburn estate to commemorate the lives and achievements of iconic screen legend Katharine Hepburn, Bryn Mawr class of 1928, and her mother Katharine Houghton Hepburn, Bryn Mawr class of 1900, who was an activist for reproductive rights and women's suffrage. "It is an honor to announce Patti Smith as this year's Hepburn Medal recipient," said Katherine Rowe, Director of the Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center. "Her boldness and independence resonates deeply with the history of the two Hepburns and the unique community of a women's college. Her creativity across many media strikes a deep chord among Bryn Mawr alumnae and among our students now, as they head into richly multi-mediated lives."

The Katharine Hepburn Medal will be awarded at Bryn Mawr College on Thursday, February 7, 2013.

Former Hepburn Medal recipients include the actresses Lauren Bacall and Blythe Danner, Jane Golden, executive director of Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program, and Helene Gayle, president and chief executive officer of the international humanitarian organization CARE.

For more information on the Hepburn Center, as well as biographies of Katharine Hepburn and her mother, Katharine Houghton Hepburn, visit the Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center at www.brynmawr.edu/hepburn.

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