

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Contacts: Chinyere Hubbard
chubbard@dcconvention.com
202-249-3217

Melody M. McDowell
melodyaka@aol.com
312-371-8917

**WALTER E. WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER AND ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA
SORORITY, INC. BREAK GUINNESS WORLD RECORD FOR THE LARGEST-EVER
SIT-DOWN DINNER**

(Washington, DC) – Officials from the London-based Guinness World Records announced that the Washington Convention Center Authority and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. had set the record for hosting the largest-ever sit-down dinner in the history of conventions worldwide. The record-breaking achievement took place on July 17, 2008 when 16,206 members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority dined at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center as part of its Centennial Convention.

Mayor Fenty, city officials, Alpha Kappa Alpha's International President Barbara A. McKinzie, Centerplate's CEO Des Hague and a delegation of business and hospitality leaders joined the Authority for the presentation of the coveted honor by Guinness adjudicator Danny Girton, Jr. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

"I applaud the ladies of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., for selecting the District of Columbia and the Washington Convention Center as the backdrop for their historic centennial celebration last summer." As a result, AKA and the convention center together created an incredibly successful event that has garnered national attention. The District is the founding home of the sorority and is proud to share the Guinness World Record title with the sorority and look forward to many more record-breaking events."

"Earning the Guinness World Record recognizes a monumental effort on the part of our staff and our catering partner, Centerplate/NBSE," said Gregory A. O'Dell, Washington Convention Center Authority CEO and general manager. "All along, our goal has been to serve our guests in Alpha Kappa Alpha with the same high level of service that they have extended to their communities over the past 100 years, and winning this award is proof of that commitment."

"Alpha Kappa Alpha is delighted that our dinner catapulted the Washington Convention Center Authority onto the Guinness World Records for the largest ever sit-down dinner ever held worldwide," said Barbara A. McKinzie, international president, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. "It is a testimony to Alpha Kappa Alpha's power, strength and over 100-year legacy of greatness that we created the occasion for this global achievement. It is also a tribute to the Washington Convention Center Authority's excellence that the dinner was so memorable and historic."

For the dinner, WCCA's catering partner, Centerplate/NBSE prepared baby iceberg wedge salad, three tons of beef filet, served as Beef Wellington, along with 2.25 tons of mashed potatoes, 1,800 gallons of pink lemonade and thousands of individual "Pink Velvet" chocolate cakes with green icing. Alpha Kappa Alpha's official colors are salmon pink and apple green.

Centerplate/NBSE used approximately 300,000 dining utensils, and tableware was set against 3.5 miles of linen table cloths and seven miles of pink and green napkins for the event. To help accommodate the unprecedented number of attendees, Centerplate solicited assistance from wait staff throughout the East Coast. Centerplate's network of chefs and convention center professionals borrowed personnel and equipment from New York, Denver and Dallas to assist.

In addition to the regular catering staff, Centerplate/NBSE brought in an additional 300 chefs, 46 managers, 65 captains, 32 distribution assistants and 1,200 waiters.

"At Centerplate, we obsess about creating 'wow moments' for our clients, so we are thrilled to be recognized for our ability to blend superior service and great culinary talent with peerless technical skill and logistical innovation," said Des Hague, President and CEO of Centerplate.

"But in the end, the opportunity to make sure that the guests attending the AKA Centennial had a wonderful experience was our main priority. Sharing this world record with Alpha Kappa Alpha, the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, and everyone who participated is a real honor."

The previous world record *was* on April 28, 2001 where 11,483 people were guests at the world's largest silver service dinner party sponsored by Vodafone Group PLC at Earls Court in London. According to officials from the Guinness World Records, "Walter E. Washington Convention Center's world-class achievement is undeniably impressive."

The Sorority's biennial conference drew more than 25,000 registered attendees and another 10,000 unregistered members, who spent millions of dollars on hotels, food and shopping during the week-long convention. Washington hotels, restaurants and attractions developed an unparalleled array of themed cocktails, receptions and other programs to welcome the group, coordinated by Destination DC, the official convention and tourism corporation for Washington, D.C. In the end, the Sorority pumped over \$100 million into the District of Columbia economy during the Convention, including money spent on hotel, food, shopping, goods and services.

Guinness World Records (GWR) is the globally recognized authority on record-breaking achievement and provides the most comprehensive collection of the greatest and most amazing feats from all over the world. GWR inspires people to strive for their personal best, and to join alongside other record holders.

Annually, Guinness World Records receives approximately 60,000 applications – and their records managers personally receive about 1,000 every week. The reality is that of all these claims submitted only 3% are eventually accredited as Guinness World Records achievements, and are able to enter into the GWR family of more than 40,000 records.

About the Washington Convention Center Authority

The Washington Convention Center Authority was established for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, equipping, maintaining, and operating a new convention center in the District of Columbia. The Authority engages in activities deemed appropriate to promote trade shows, conventions, and other events closely related to activities of the Convention Center. Since opening its doors in 2003, the 2.3-million-square-foot Walter E. Washington Convention Center has proven to be essential to the economy of the District of Columbia, generating nearly \$400 million annually. For more information about the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, call 202-249-3217 or visit www.dcconvention.com.

About Centerplate, Inc.

Centerplate, Inc., with its principal executive office in Stamford, CT, crafts and delivers extraordinary entertainment experiences in more than 130 prominent sports, entertainment and meeting venues across North America. Centerplate has provided its services to many high profile events including 24 World Series games, 9 U.S. Presidential Inaugural Balls, 11 Super Bowls, including Super Bowl XLII in February 2008, 9 NCAA Final Four Men's Basketball Tournaments and 14 World Cup Soccer Games. Visit the company online at www.centerplate.com

About Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is America's first Greek-letter organization founded in 1908 by, and for, African-American college women. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, it is one of the world's leading service organizations. The Sorority's members have made a commitment "to serve all mankind" through a nucleus of more than 225,000 women in over 975 chapters in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, Germany, Korea, Japan and in the continent of Africa. Barbara A. McKinzie is the 27th International President. McKinzie's administration is marked by the theme: ESP, which stands for Economics, Service and Partnerships. For more information, log on to www.aka1908.com.