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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE     **CHICAGO'S FIRST LADY CRUISES – BACKGROUND**

**WHAT:** *Chicago's First Lady Cruises* is the brand name for the original Mercury Yacht Charters, Inc. established in 1991 by Holly Agra as a private party market cruise company. Bob and Holly Agra are the third-generation owners/operators of the flagship company, Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline, originated in the 1930s by Portuguese immigrant Arthur Agra.

**WHERE:** *Chicago's First Lady Cruises* is located at Riverside Gardens at the lower level and southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue bridge and Wacker Drive, three blocks north of Millennium Park.

**GREEN MISSION:** As stewards of Chicago's waterways, Chicago's First Lady Cruises (CFL) recognizes its responsibility to contribute to the protection of the waterways. CFL recycles used oil, engine batteries, beverage containers, cardboard, and paper; uses low-flush toilets and environmentally safe cleaning solutions; and promotes the use of public transportation to staff and crew. Cruise brochures are printed on recycled paper and architecture tour maps are recycled daily as guests disembark. The CFL fleet uses 11% biodiesel fuel. Additionally, the lush, landscaped Riverside Gardens dock with its annual Monarch Butterfly Garden provides natural cooling and is representative of the "green" initiatives CFL has embraced.

**CHICAGO FIRST LADY CRUISE FLEET:** *Chicago's First Lady Cruises* owns and operates four luxury yachts: *Chicago's First Lady*, *Chicago's Little Lady*, *Chicago's Fair Lady* and *Lady Grebe*. The fleet is specifically targeted toward the upscale private party, wedding rehearsal dinner and corporate event markets. *Chicago's First Lady*, *Chicago's Little Lady* and *Chicago's Fair Lady* are also the official vessels for the Chicago Architecture Foundation river cruise. *Chicago's First Lady* and *Chicago's Little Lady* are both styled after the 1920s luxury cruising yachts such as the former Presidential yacht "Sequoia," and are very popular with groups seeking unique and exclusive use venues. Both vessels have climate-controlled main deck salons decorated in hunter green and burgundy hues with mahogany-toned and brass accents. Comfortable upholstered chairs at round tables are positioned by large oblong windows, providing all passengers with a never-ending view of Chicago's world-famous skyline.

*Chicago's First Lady* was christened in 1991 and is a \$1.2 million custom-built 225-passenger yacht. She can provide dinner seating for up to 75 passengers in the salon complete with a full service bar, prep kitchen and an open-air upper deck expanding the passenger capability to 225 for reception-style entertaining.

*Chicago's Little Lady*, joined her sister vessel in 1999. She is a smaller duplicate of the "Sequoia" design and can accommodate up to 100 passengers. In addition to a similarly appointed salon, she also features two full-service bars, one in the salon and one on the upper deck.

(more)

## **Chicago's First Lady -Background**

### **Add one**

*Chicago's Fair Lady*, accommodating 125 passengers, joined the fleet in 2006 and like her 1920s cruising yacht style sister vessels, offers an open-air upper deck. Unique to *Chicago's Fair Lady* is a 180-degree window-wrapped main deck salon providing unobstructed big-picture views of Chicago's skyscrapers. *Chicago's Fair Lady* follows her sister cruisers and transforms into a private party yacht offering passengers sparkling panoramic views of Chicago's famous lakefront skyline from both the upper deck and the comfortable enclosed main deck. Her elegant temperature-controlled salon, decorated in burgundy and hunter green with mahogany-toned wood and brass accents, echoes the luxurious yachting style of her sister ships. She also features handicapped restrooms and full service bars.

*Lady Grebe* is a 1961-vintage cruising yacht accommodating two to six passengers. Docked at Burnham Harbor, just north of McCormick Place, the luxurious 48-foot mahogany yacht epitomizes the golden era of yachting and is perfect for small upscale gatherings including exhibitor entertaining. The graceful and Chicago-bred *Lady Grebe* is built on a double-planked mahogany hull with a white oak frame and features teak fore and aft deck space for sun-bathing, paneled salons, large staterooms, tiled baths, integrated sound system, a full galley, and crew facilities.

Specialty private party entertainment options are available for all vessels including: private Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) tour with CAF-certified volunteer docents; Summer Fireworks Cruises on Wednesdays at 9:30 pm and Saturdays at 10:15 pm; as well as the City of Chicago 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks presentation. Chicago's First Lady Cruises offers full-service catering through its four professional catering partners, Entertaining Company, Harry Caray's Catering and Events, and Jimmy Banos Custom Catering.

Chicago's First Lady Cruises has partnered with the Chicago Architecture Foundation since 1993 to operate more than 1,600 architecture river cruises annually to the general public with commentary provided by more than 100 CAF-certified volunteer docents during its May-November season. Each vessel has a captain, two crew members and a bartender, and carries 100% capacity life preservers. *Chicago's First Lady Cruises* is certified by the U.S. Coast Guard, the City of Chicago Department of Consumer Services and Business Licensing Departments and is certified as a WBE woman-owned business by the City of Chicago.

**FOR PRIVATE PARTY RESERVATIONS: 847-358-1330**

**WEBSITE:** [www.Cruisechicago.com](http://www.Cruisechicago.com)

**FOR INDIVIDUAL CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION RIVER CRUISE**

**TICKETS:** E-ticketing at [www.ticketmaster.com/rivercruise](http://www.ticketmaster.com/rivercruise) or 1-800-982-2787, [www.architecture.org](http://www.architecture.org)

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