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**TRIBUTE DINNER HONORING JOSEPHINE POWELL TO BE HELD
OCTOBER 19, 2006 IN WASHINGTON, DC**

July 14, 2006, Washington, DC — On Thursday, October 19, 2006, The Textile Museum will present the 2006 George Hewitt Myers Award to Josephine Powell, internationally renowned ethnographer, photographer and expert on nomadic weaving and traditions in Turkey. Named for The Textile Museum's founder, the award for lifetime achievement recognizes her exceptional contributions to the study and understanding of the textile arts.

Powell will be honored and presented with the award at a fundraising Tribute Dinner at The Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Washington, DC. The Dinner will commence with a VIP cocktail reception for high-level sponsors, offering the opportunity to visit with Powell, followed by a lavish dinner created under the direction of the Ritz's prestigious Chef

Richard Arnoldi. Bruce Baganz, President of the Museum's Board of Trustees, will present the George Hewitt Myers Award to Powell and Textile Museum Director Daniel Walker will provide remarks. Guests will include dignitaries and business leaders from the Turkish and American communities. Proceeds from this fundraising event will support Museum activities.

For more details, including sponsorship opportunities, call 202-667-0441, ext. 61 or visit www.textilemuseum.org/tributedinner.htm.



Photograph of Josephine Powell by Jürgen Frank, from an article in *Cornucopia* issue 30, *Josephine Powell: An American Nomad*, by Andrew Finkel.

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About Josephine Powell

For the length of her six-decade-long career, Josephine Powell has traveled from Tanganyika to Afghanistan to Anatolia and beyond. Born in New York City in 1919, Powell received a BA degree from Cornell University and an MA from Columbia University. Between 1946 and 1952 the UN's International Refugee Organization recruited her to assist with the resettlement of WWII refugees. Her work with one group, the Kalmuk, a western Mongolian tribe, was so successful that the tribe adopted her as "Mother of the Kalmuks." Following her work with the UN, she became a freelance photographer, fearlessly traveling alone to remote parts of the world. Powell's work brought her to regions never before photographed or documented by Westerners. Her extensive travel from 1952 on included fieldwork in the Middle East, the Indian sub-continent and North Africa – including a horseback journey to the Minaret of Jam, the famous Seljuk monument in western Afghanistan. Powell's photographs have been published in hundreds of books and are regarded as the standard documentation of the architectural creations in these areas.

Powell visited Turkey for the first time in 1955 to photograph Byzantine mosaics and became interested in their relationship to Turkish flatwoven textiles. She soon concluded that the conventional wisdom regarding the provenance and designs of these textiles was inaccurate. During her next trip to the country she received a permit to travel to eastern Turkey, an area closed to foreigners at that time. It was this journey east that began her endless fascination with Turkey. Quickly welcomed and embraced by the locals, she set out to work with the Turkish nomads themselves, gathering information about their handicraft – what purpose the objects served, why they were made and how they were created. Over the course of the next 20 years, accompanied by her Land Rover and her Belgian sheepdog, Powell photographically documented the nomadic way of life. During this time she began amassing Anatolian kilims, *ala çuval*, bands and related artifacts in a collection that reflects the role and importance of weaving in rural Anatolia.

This extensive collection has been much admired by scholars and journalists alike. It has been featured in exhibitions at the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, the Ottoman Imperial Mint building at the Topkapi Saray, The British Museum and Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum. Powell's life work has resulted in a fascinating collection of kilims, photographs,

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fragments of tents, sketches, bags, clothing and heavy work tools collected as research material. Each item has been carefully catalogued by Powell and each provides its own story of a culture at risk of losing its identity and nomadic way of life, as well as becoming passed from Western view due to political upheavals.

Guided by the knowledge of the changing climate of the world, Josephine Powell was led in another direction during the 1980s. Her extensive work with the traditional Anatolian nomadic women sparked a belief that the lives of women were more purposeful and dignified prior to contemporary urban living. Working with the chemist Harald Boehmer, she played a major role in the revival of the art of natural dyeing in Turkey, and in establishing the DOBAG Project – the first Turkish women’s cooperative – which makes carpets using authentic designs and natural dyes.

Powell was chosen by The Textile Museum’s Board of Trustees to receive the 2006 George Hewitt Myers Award in recognition of her extensive accomplishments related to the field of textile arts. “Josephine Powell’s work in documenting the last of the Anatolian nomadic traditions and their flatwoven textiles is a remarkable ethnographic accomplishment. A key aspect of The Textile Museum’s mission is to further the understanding of textiles and the cultures that produce them. Clearly Josephine Powell has been guided by this same philosophy, dedicating her life work to this goal,” said Bruce P. Baganz, President of the Museum’s Board of Trustees.

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Founded in 1925 by George Hewitt Myers, The Textile Museum is an international center for the exhibition, study, collection and preservation of the textile arts. The Museum explores the role that textiles play in the daily and ceremonial life of individuals the world over. Special attention is given to textiles of the Near East, Asia, Africa and the indigenous cultures of the Americas. The Museum also presents exhibitions of historical and contemporary quilts, and fiber art. With a collection of more than 17,000 textiles and rugs and an unparalleled library, The Textile Museum is a unique and valuable resource for people locally, nationally and internationally.

The Textile Museum is located at 2320 ‘S’ Street, NW in Washington, DC. The Museum is open Monday - Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Admission is free; suggested donation is \$5.00. For further information, call 202-667-0441.

For more information or images, please contact Cyndi Bohlin at 202-496-5061, or by email at cbohlin@textilemuseum.org or visit www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm.