



The Annenberg Foundation Trust at
SUNNYLANDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COWAN NAMED PRESIDENT OF SUNNYLANDS TRUST

RANCHO MIRAGE, CALIF., September 23, 2010 – Geoffrey Cowan, a University of Southern California University Professor and dean emeritus of the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, has been named the first president of the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands.

The Sunnylands Trust (www.sunnylandstrust.org), is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit operating entity established by the Annenberg Foundation primarily to hold high level retreats that “address serious issues facing the nation and the world community.”

Sunnylands (www.sunnylands.org) is the name of the late Walter and Leonore Annenberg’s beautiful 200-acre estate in Rancho Mirage, Calif. The estate will serve as a venue for important meetings of top government officials and leaders from education, philanthropy, the arts, culture, science and medicine.

The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands will advance the Trust’s mission of promoting world peace, facilitating international agreements, improving the functioning of the three branches of government, and providing the widest possible range of opportunities for high-level interaction and communication in the public interest. A stunning new visitors center and desert garden – set to open in late 2011 – will also offer a variety of educational programs and public tours of the historic estate.

“We have an opportunity to use one of the world’s most spectacular venues to make an impact on a range of important issues,” Cowan said. “I am honored that the trustees have asked me to take on the challenge of helping to create an institution that will build on the Annenbergs’ extraordinary legacy.”

“A talented administrator and visionary leader, Geoffrey Cowan will help create a world-class institution in an inspiring setting,” the trustees said in a statement. “We look forward to working with him to advance efforts to foster dialogue and build understanding among nations and individuals as we progress toward a more just, peaceful and sustainable society.”

Cowan has been an important force in almost every facet of the communication world—as a public interest lawyer, academic administrator, best-selling author, award-winning teacher, playwright, television producer and government official.

From 1996-2007, Cowan served as dean of the USC Annenberg School. He is one of 21 distinguished members of the USC faculty to hold the rank of University Professor and also serves on the faculties of the School of Communication, School of Journalism, and USC Gould School of Law.

Prior to becoming dean, he served the nation as the 22nd director of the Voice of America and as director of the International Broadcasting Bureau.

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Page 2 of 2

In other public service, Cowan chaired the Los Angeles commission that wrote the city's ethics and campaign finance law – cited as a model for the nation – for which he was awarded "Man of the Year" by the Council of Government Ethics Leaders. He also chaired the California Bipartisan Commission on Internet Political Practices.

A graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School, Cowan is the Walter Lippmann Fellow of the American Academy of Political and Social Science and an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is the author of *See No Evil: The Backstage Battle Over Sex and Violence on Television* (Simon & Schuster, 1980), and the best-selling *The People v. Clarence Darrow: The Bribery Trial of America's Greatest Lawyer* (Times Books, 1993).

He co-wrote the play *Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers*, which explores the delicate balance between the press, public's right to know and the government's need to protect some vital national secrets. A major production of the play was presented at 25 venues around the country in 2007-2008 and an updated version was produced Off-Broadway in New York City in Spring 2010.

Cowan chairs the California HealthCare Foundation board of directors and serves on the boards of Common Sense Media, Human Rights Watch and the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Pacific Council on International Policy.

In an arrangement designed to create useful synergies for both the Sunnylands Trust and USC, Cowan will remain a member of the USC faculty as a University Professor, Annenberg Family Chair in Communication Leadership, and director of the USC Annenberg School's Center on Communication Leadership & Policy.

"The trustees and I are looking forward to launching Sunnylands in the next 18 months as a location for important meetings and retreats and to advance the public's appreciation for the historic and architectural significance of the Sunnylands estate," Cowan said.

More information about Sunnylands may be found online at www.sunnylands.org and www.sunnylandstrust.org.

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