

THE ACADEMY WELCOMES LESLIE BENZIES, DAN HOUSER AND SAM HOUSER TO ITS HALL OF FAME

Rockstar Games Team Honored for Groundbreaking Contributions to Interactive Entertainment Industry

LOS ANGELES – Feb. 4, 2014 – The Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences (AIAS) will induct Rockstar Games' Leslie Benzies, Dan Houser and Sam Houser as the 18th, 19th and 20th members to its Hall of Fame. Rockstar Games is well known for its blockbuster **Grand Theft Auto** series and open-world epics such as **Red Dead Redemption** and **Bully**. Under the direction of these visionaries, Rockstar Games blazed a path for the open world genre, pushing the medium forward and repeatedly raising the bar for game design. Rockstar's commitment to innovation, detail and a deep love of popular culture have spoiled multiple generations of fans with their well-crafted, story-driven and adrenaline-pumping games, always delivered on a grand scale.

This year's Hall of Fame honorees will be presented by Phil Harrison, Corporate Vice President of Microsoft. Phil has worked alongside Rockstar Games from their inception in the 90's through the launch of some of the company's most influential games, including 2013's number-one selling game, **Grand Theft Auto V**.

"A rare combination of cultural savvy, technical prowess and a deep passion for interactive entertainment has made Rockstar Games a global success story that has helped propel the games medium forward," said Phil Harrison. "I am proud and honored to present Leslie, Sam and Dan with this award on behalf of the entire industry."

"Sam, Dan and Leslie have developed some of this generation's defining interactive masterpieces," said Martin Rae, president, Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences. "It is an honor to induct the Rockstar team to the Academy's Hall of Fame, they are among great company. Their commitment to their craft and their passion in creating such memorable experiences is a true testament to their achievements as auteurs."

Rockstar Games was founded in 1998 and acquired Rockstar North (formerly DMA Design) in 1999. Together with their extended development and publishing teams, Sam and Dan Houser, along with Leslie Benzies, helped define the path of the entire medium into the cultural mainstream with more than a decade's worth of innovative digital entertainment, including the **Grand Theft Auto** series, one of the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful videogame series of all time.

After the prior release of top-down versions of **Grand Theft Auto**, the game's shift to 3D with the release of 2001's **Grand Theft Auto III** brought about a sea change in modern videogames, combining a contemporary gangster narrative with a highly detailed, open world that allowed players to explore a richly populated universe and engage in the story at their own pace. The game's combination of deep and detailed atmosphere, free-form gameplay and gritty social satire delivered a sense of freedom and place never before seen in videogames and earned multiple awards including Outstanding Achievement in Game Design, and Outstanding Achievement in Game Play Engineering from AIAS.

The critical and commercial success was followed in 2002 by **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City**, which expanded on the concepts of **Grand Theft Auto III** in every direction possible, earning multiple Game of the Year awards and for Benzie's, *Wired Magazine's* Game Designer of the Year. 2004's **Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas** managed to yet again exceed fan's expectations of the series, achieving multiple awards including AIAS Game of The Year, while becoming the highest selling game on the Playstation 2.

2008's **Grand Theft Auto IV** brought the series into high definition to rave reviews and remains one of the highest rated games of all time on any platform. **Grand Theft Auto IV's** critical acclaim was matched by its sales success, earning the Guinness World Record for single day sales of an entertainment product – a record now held by 2013's **Grand Theft Auto V**. **Grand Theft Auto V** pushed the series to new heights with a massive and incredibly detailed reimagining of modern-day Southern California, as well as pioneering a new approach to both gameplay and story, allowing players to dip in and out of the lives of three different characters to simultaneously play three sides of the game's interwoven story. Once again, the series earned critical acclaim and record breaking sales, generating a stunning \$1 billion in revenue in just three days. In addition, the launch of Grand Theft Auto Online set the series on a new path as players could share in and create content for an ever evolving version of the Grand Theft Auto universe.

As both developers and publishers, Rockstar Games has released a string of groundbreaking games including **Manhunt**, **Bully**, *The Warriors*, **L.A. Noire** and 2009's **Red Dead Redemption**, an open world game set in the dying years of the American West, which earned more than 160 Game of the year awards. They've made ground breaking games about illegal street racing, table tennis, lonely school boys, nightclub owners having mid-life crises, biker gangs, therapy and zombie cowboys. Presently, Rockstar Games continues to develop new content for **Grand Theft Auto V**, **Grand Theft Auto Online** and work on future projects. To date, they have sold-in nearly 250 million games worldwide.

Each year, in consideration for its Hall of Fame, the Academy evaluates game creators who have been instrumental in the development of highly influential games and moving a particular genre forward. These individuals demonstrate the highest level of creativity and innovation, resulting in significant product influence on a scale that expands the scope of the industry. Past AIAS Hall of Fame recipients include: Gabe Newell (2013), Tim Sweeney (2012), Dr. Greg Zeschuk (2011), Dr. Ray Muzyka (2011), Mark Cerny (2010), and Bruce Shelley (2009).

The Housers and Benzie's will be honored at the 17th D.I.C.E. Awards on Thursday, Feb. 6, at The Joint in the Hard Rock Hotel Las Vegas. The Awards will be co-hosted by Felicia Day and Freddie Wong and live streamed on Twitch at www.twitch.tv/dice.

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