

FOR RELEASE AT 7:00 P.M. - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2008

For more information contact:
Chris J. Murphy, 778.1312
Coronation Ball Committee Chairman
Ann Hergenrader, 402.334.8435
Women's Ball Committee Chairman

**AK-SAR-BEN HONORS CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY
AND REVEREND JOHN P. SCHLEGEL, S.J.**

October 11, 2008 – Omaha, Nebr. Creighton University and Reverend John P. Schlegel, S.J., were honored for their contributions to the Omaha Community at the Ak-Sar-Ben Coronation and Ball on October 11. Nearly 2,500 attendees witnessed the introduction of **not** a *King*, but *Quivira's Most Honored Citizen*. The event also included the formal introduction of the 2008 Court of Quivira which included honorees from more than 200 Nebraska and western Iowa families.

The *Most Honored Citizen of Quivira*, Reverend John P. Schlegel, S.J., became President of Creighton University in 2000. Since being inaugurated as the 23rd President, the University has invested \$250 million in campus expansion and improvements, adding 40 acres to campus, and increasing enrollment by 14%. This year marks the first time the University and its leader have been honored by the Ak-Sar-Ben Coronation Ball.

Creighton University, founded in 1878, is one of 28 universities in the United States sponsored by the Society of Jesus. Jesuit institutions are Catholic in their identity and mission, focused on academic excellence and service to the needy in their communities and beyond.

The story of its founding began with Edward Creighton and his younger brother, John, who came to Omaha in 1854. Edward surveyed the route for the transcontinental telegraph and supervised its construction west from Julesburg, Colorado. Their subsequent business ventures in freighting, ranching, railroading and banking [First National Bank] became major forces in the

-more-

economic development of Omaha. Edward died in 1874 and his widow, Mary Lucretia Creighton, who inherited Edward's fortune, specified \$100,000 in her will for the purpose of establishing a school in memory of her husband.

Mary Lucretia specifically directed that the school be "in the city of Omaha," "of the class and grade of a college." She died in 1876 and her executors, who included her brother-in-law, John Creighton, purchased 6.2 acres of land at the northwest corner of 24th and California Streets. On that site they erected a school building and then transferred the land, the building, and additional securities to the Right Rev. James O'Connor, D.D., Bishop of Omaha, on July 1, 1878. That land and that building are still part of Creighton's campus.

That same year Bishop O'Connor asked the Jesuits to operate the college. The first president, Rev. Romanus A. Shaffel, S.J., arrived in Omaha in July of that year. The school opened on September 2, 1878. The initial faculty was comprised of five Jesuits and two lay persons, including a woman.

At the time of its opening there were few institutions in the Midwest that prepared students for college level work; hence much of the initial teaching in the college was at a secondary school level. It was not until 13 years later, in 1891, that the first baccalaureate degree was awarded. However, "The Creighton University" had been incorporated under Nebraska law in 1879.

Today the University provides its 4,000 undergraduate and 3,000 professional and graduate students an atmosphere that challenges them academically and professionally, and supports and inspires them individually in a faith-based environment.

In addition to its original College of Arts and Sciences, which enrolls 37 percent of the University's students, Creighton has the College of Business Administration, the School of Law, the Graduate School, University College, and the Schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Health Professions.

In 1891, Count John Creighton and his wife Sarah Emily established the John Creighton School of Medicine and opened the Creighton Memorial St. Joseph Hospital. From these benefactions evolved today's Creighton University Medical Center. CUMC is the busiest trauma center in the state, home to a top-ranked program in cardiology and programs in nutrition ranging

-more-

from obesity to diabetes, and internationally recognized for research in hereditary cancers, osteoporosis and solid mass tumors. Creighton is the only Catholic university in the United States to have the full complement of health professions programs -- dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and health professions – housed in a full academic medical center. The Center for Health Policy and Ethics, unique in the area, plays a vital role in guiding Creighton’s commitment to health care in the Catholic tradition.

Across the decades, Creighton has been recognized as an economic driver, community service advocate and urban developer. In 2006 the University was one of 25 institutions to be recognized nationally for its contributions to urban development. For the latest fiscal year, Creighton University spent \$436.7 million. This spending in the state of Nebraska produced an overall impact of \$761.4 million. Additionally, Creighton spending supported a total of 9,855 jobs with wages and salaries of approximately \$308.9 million. Not including indirect property taxes supporting local schools, Creighton spending for the latest fiscal year added roughly \$27.4 million in state and local taxes.

In 2008 the University was named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with distinction for exemplary service efforts supplying more than 68,000 volunteer hours to the needy of Omaha and community agencies. This includes the Magis Clinic at Siena Francis House, the only free primary care clinic in Omaha.

In 2008, for the sixth consecutive year, Creighton University is No. 1 in U.S. News & World Report’s ranking of Midwest masters’ universities. It is the eleventh time in 13 years Creighton has been No. 1, and the 22nd straight year the University has been ranked at or near the top of the magazine’s “America’s Best Colleges” edition. This year Creighton was also recognized as the No. 1 Midwestern master’s granting institution in a new category “Great Schools, Great Prices,” where students get the best return on their tuition investment.

Over the years Creighton has always been at the cutting edge of discovering new knowledge and innovative ways of teaching. Recent accomplishments include, among others, the first web-based Doctorate of Pharmacy to be fully accredited in the United States and is now pursuing a web-based Doctorate of Pharmacy in Occupational Therapy with the University of

-more-

Alaska. The Werner Institute in the School of Law houses one of the few degree programs in mediation and dispute resolution, including a focus on health care and small business. An MBA with a focus on financial analysis was launched this year, while the innovative first-year orientation – the Ratio Studiorum Program – contributes to solid retention. Due in part to that program, this semester Creighton has the largest enrollment in its history – 7,100 students. A new Doctorate in Nursing Practice will be launched this fall and a variety of Master’s level programs are about to be unveiled.

Creighton has also been recognized for technology availability to students, undergraduate research, and a nationally recognized campus master plan.

“Ak-Sar-Ben is pleased to honor Creighton University and its visionary leader for contributions to the Omaha community and for educating Omaha’s youth for more than a century,” said Chris J. Murphy, Chairman of the Ak-Sar-Ben Coronation Ball Committee and Chairman and CEO of First Westroads Bank.

In 2008 Creighton became a matching scholarship partner for the Ak-Sar-Ben Horatio Alger Scholarship Program. Winners attending Creighton receive a matching contribution of \$5,000.

“Creighton’s willingness to match our need-based scholarship is a tribute to the core values of the institution, said Richard R. Bell, Chairman of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation and Chairman and CEO of HDR, Inc. “We hope other Nebraska colleges join suit.”

As one of six children born to Aaron and Irma Schlegel in Dubuque, Iowa, Schlegel entered the Society of Jesus in 1963. In 1969 he obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Classics and in 1970 a Masters of Arts in Political Science from St. Louis University. He went on to earn an honors degree in theology from the University of London and was ordained a Catholic priest on June 22, 1973. He subsequently earned a Doctorate in International Relations from Oxford University in 1977, at which time he returned to Creighton to begin his professional career. At Creighton he taught political science and then served as an Assistant Academic Vice President from 1978 to his departure in 1982. Over the next eighteen years, Schlegel served as the

Academic Dean and Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at Rockhurst College in Kansas City;
Dean of Arts & Sciences at Marquette University in Milwaukee; Academic and Executive Vice

-more-

President at John Carroll University in Cleveland. Moving to San Francisco in 1991, Schlegel became President of the University of San Francisco, a position he held until moving back to Omaha and Creighton in 2000.

Professionally, he is a member of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Nebraska, the American Council of Education, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. In addition, he serves on the Board of Saint Joseph Hospital and the Board of Regents of Loras College.

His local community involvement includes serving as a member of the USSTRATCOM Consultation Committee, the Cathedral Arts Project and a Council Member for the Jesuit Partnership Council of Omaha. He is a board member for the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Joslyn Art Museum, the Nebraska Shakespeare Festival, Opera Omaha, United Way of the Midlands, Greater Omaha Alliance for Business Ethics, and the Mid-America Council of the Boy Scouts of America, serving as Council President in 2006-07.

His past civic memberships include serving on the boards of Creighton Preparatory, Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart, Loyola University Chicago, Xavier University, World Affairs Council of Northern California, St. Mary's Medical Center Foundation, Western College Association, American Council on Education, American International School of Hong Kong, American Red Cross-Bay Area, California Academy of Sciences, St. Louis University, Heythrop College, University of London, Cleveland Center for Economic Education, Beaumont Academy of Cleveland, and St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland.

Father Schlegel has three honorary degrees from the University of San Francisco, San Francisco State University, and Loras College.

For his service to the greater Omaha community, Fr. Schlegel has been recognized with the Otto Swanson Spirit of Service Award from the National Conference for Community and Justice (2003), the Honored Citizen Award from Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Society Lodge #1

(2004), the Gala Award for Vision from Downtown Omaha Inc. (2005), the Boy Scouts of America Distinguished Eagle Scout and Silver Beaver Awards (both in 2007), and the Tim Rouse Advocate

-more-

for Women in Leadership Award from the Institute for Career Advancement Needs (2008). He has also been inducted into Alpha Sigma Nu (1979), Leadership Omaha (1979-80), and into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Northern Lieutenancy (2003). He has also appeared in Who's Who in America and American Education since 1991.

In addition to campus-wide expansion, Schlegel's tenure at Creighton has focused on strategic planning, fund raising, health and wellness, and diversity. Within two years, he initiated a strategic planning process, a five-year financial plan and completed a campus master plan. In 2005, he launched the "Willing to Lead" campaign with a goal of raising \$350 million. The Campaign is on target to achieve its goal.

The campus master plan has capitalized on historical opportunities to purchase land in order to create a more vibrant and robust campus environment. The Mike and Josie Harper Center for Student Life and Learning, the signature east-campus anchor facility of this plan, opened this fall. The building integrates student and academic services under one roof and serves as the University's new front door, welcoming prospective students and their families, alumni and all campus visitors.

The Harper Center complements the addition of the Hixson-Lied Science Center, Michael Anderson Plaza, Morrison Stadium, Davis Square and Opus residence halls, the Venteicher Mall, the renovation of St. John's Church and Creighton Hall (aka Administration Building). This progress represents a \$250 million investment in Creighton's expansion and infrastructure since 2000.

In the fall of 2007, The University broke ground for a new athletic center on campus primarily in support of women's basketball and volleyball. The Ryan Center and D. J. Sokol Arena, a 46,000 square foot facility, is also expected to be used for other campus and community-wide events such as high school graduations and concerts. This new facility adds to the infrastructure support of a nationally recognized Division I sports program which boasts an annual graduation rate of 92% of all Creighton student athletes.

Simultaneously, Schlegel has championed several significant causes on and off campus. His dedication to diversity is reflected in the annual diversity summit and CEO breakfast started in

-more-

2001 as well as his commitment to the advancement of women with the addition of women to his higher administration and at the board level. In 2008, he was awarded Resolution #386 from the Nebraska Legislature recognizing this commitment to diversity.

As a fitness enthusiast, Schlegel has endorsed a smoke-free campus and medical center, has supported a wellness program for faculty and staff, including the hiring of a full-time wellness coordinator; and relentlessly encourages students to participate in intramural sports; he is seen in many runs and walks in the Omaha area. For relaxation, Schlegel enjoys cooking, classical music and jazz, reading, hiking and other outdoor activities.

Creighton University, with Schlegel at its helm, is poised to continue its strong influence on the community, region and nation through its economic impact, its research and professional programs, and its more than 58,000 current Creighton alums living in 89 countries.

The Ak-Sar-Ben Coronation Ball has a mission of promoting, recognizing and celebrating volunteerism, philanthropy and community pride. More than \$3 million in scholarship funding has been raised from Coronation Ball proceeds.

###