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For Immediate Release

Michelle Wright Performance to Benefit Adoption Organization

University Park, November 16, 2004 - Michelle Wright is one of Canada's hottest country stars – so why is she descending south to University Park, Illinois, in the middle of a popular Canadian Christmas concert tour? It's because she believes in children.



Michelle Wright

"Every now and then something comes along, and you have to say, let's do it," Wright said of her upcoming performance at Governors State University's Center for Performing Arts.

Wright agreed to perform when the Chicago Area Families for Adoption (CAFFA) asked her to headline its "Celebrate Adoption Music Fest" on Saturday, November 27, at 7 p.m. The concert event is centered on funding adoption education, awareness, and resources.

"Michelle agreed to come down between concerts in Canada and make our event part of her "I'm Dreaming of a Wright Christmas" tour," said CAFFA President Robbie O'Shea. O'Shea added that Wright is making a generous contribution to CAFFA in addition to her appearance.

Giving performances to help children is nothing new for Wright. The 1993 winner of the Academy of

Country Music's Top New Female Artist Award has given concerts to support World Vision, and the CAFFA event struck her as particularly important. "Children need our help," she said. "We have to be the ones looking out for them. At this concert people can help just by showing up."

The show was organized by O'Shea, who also managed to book country's deep-voiced Jeff Bates, an adult adoptee.

"This is a wonderful, family-friendly event," O'Shea said. "Michelle sings country and contemporary music, and Jeff is all country."

O'Shea, who has a Ph.D. in Physical Therapy and teaches the discipline at Governors State University, is an adoptive mother of two and the author of an adopted children's book titled "I'm Brown and My Sister Isn't," which tackles the perceptual issues that can arise in biracial adoptions.

O'Shea said Wright is well-known in adoption circles for one of her first hit songs: "He Would Be Sixteen," a soulful vocal about a young mother who gave her son up for adoption. It's a song Wright said she almost never recorded. "When I recorded 'He Would Be Sixteen' in 1992 or 93, I didn't want to do it," she said. "I'd never been pregnant and didn't have to deal with those issues."

She said adoption has found its way into her life nevertheless. "All these years later, my best friend is an adoptive mom of two children," Wright explained. "A couple of weeks ago, I went with her to a luncheon for an adoption agency. I was touched and filled with joy for these children. I was really moved by the women and men who sacrificed and gave them up for adoption - because it was the best thing and the right thing to do at the time." Wright said she and her husband are also considering the possibility of adoption.

Wright and Bates will also hold a backstage meeting with adopted children. O'Shea said, "This is a great chance for adopted kids to meet two of the best singers in country close up and in person. They'll get to take pictures and share adoption stories and experiences."

O'Shea added that the adoption focus by no means limits the audience to people with an adoption connection. "If you love great music," she said, "That's enough."

Tickets for the Saturday, November 27 show are available for \$28 for adults and \$22 for children under 17. For tickets call 708-235-2222.