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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **GIA and Jewelers of America Form Strategic Partnership**

*The two nonprofit groups will collaborate on education, certification, public affairs and more*

New York, NY – The Gemological Institute of America (GIA) and Jewelers of America have agreed to work together on a variety of projects starting in 2009, to better fulfill the missions of both nonprofit organizations and directly benefit their constituencies.

GIA's mission to protect the public trust is closely compatible with the mission of Jewelers of America to improve consumer confidence. These two organizations also share common strategies to achieve these goals through education and communication.

GIA and Jewelers of America, the nation's largest professional association of retail jewelers, serve a vast network of adult learners and professionals, from small to very large corporate settings. The two institutions will collaborate in the following areas:

- GIA will give Jewelers of America members special access to GIA's highly respected professional education in gemology, business management, sales professionalism and bench jeweler training. GIA is also in the process of making much of its curricula available via its web-based eLearning platform, so that Jewelers of America members who can no longer afford time out-of-store to attend on-site learning events will still be able to educate themselves and their sales associates in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- Jewelers of America will contribute its expertise in the certification of bench jewelers. It will work with GIA's Jewelry Arts Program to assist in the promotion and fulfillment elements of the Jewelers of America Bench Professional Certification program, which will undergo a complete overhaul in 2009.

- GIA will continue to develop and promote consumer education materials to explain diamond grading, the Four Cs of diamond quality, colored stones, pearls, and other specialized information. These materials can help support Jewelers of America members' professional image, and increase consumers' understanding of fine jewelry.
- Jewelers of America will share its expertise in public and national government affairs with GIA in the form of timely communications and background materials when business responsibility issues arise in the jewelry supply chain or the public sector.

"Jewelers of America is delighted to partner with the Gemological Institute of America to facilitate the delivery of educational programs to our members, as well as working on other key projects together," says Matthew A. Runci, president and CEO of the association. "We look forward to a long and productive partnership with the Institute, as we are certain it will benefit our 11,000 member stores."

Donna Baker, president of GIA, said, "GIA's expertise in focused adult education and in protecting the public trust through its vital research, gemological grading systems and reports, complements Jewelers of America's leadership in ethical, social and environmental issues, as well as in the promotion of jewelers' professionalism. We believe that by combining forces in this way, we can deliver a rich array of products and services to jewelry professionals, which will help ensure their success in the 21st century, and directly benefit the jewelry buying public as well."

Along with the programs mentioned above, GIA and Jewelers of America also plan to cooperate in the area of career development and to attract more and better job candidates to the jewelry industry. Both organizations have established scholarship programs, career information projects, and other similar services. The two groups also have a shared interest in enhancing cultural diversity in the industry.

For more information contact Jewelers of America's Public Affairs Department:

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**About Jewelers of America**

Jewelers of America is the national trade association for businesses serving the fine jewelry retail marketplace, representing approximately 11,000 member stores. Jewelers of America's primary purpose is to improve consumer confidence in the jewelry industry by serving as a forum for discussion and analysis of issues; playing a leadership role in public, government and industry affairs; advocating professionalism, including high ethical, social and environmental standards; and facilitating members' access to education. For more information, visit [www.jewelers.org](http://www.jewelers.org).

**About GIA**

An independent nonprofit organization, the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) is recognized as the world's foremost authority in gemology. Established in 1931, GIA has translated its expert knowledge into the most respected gemological education available. Early in the 1950s, GIA invented the famous Four Cs of Color, Cut, Clarity and Carat Weight. In 1953, the Institute created the International Diamond Grading System™ which, today, is recognized by virtually every professional jeweler in the world.

Through research, education, gemological laboratory services, and instrument development, the Institute is dedicated to ensuring the public trust in gems and jewelry by upholding the highest standards of integrity, academics, science, and professionalism. GIA can be found on the web at [www.gia.edu](http://www.gia.edu). For GIA media queries, contact Laura Simanton at 760-603-4112, or Jessica Sachariason at 760-603-4197.

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