

For Immediate Release

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Executive Pastry Chef Gary O'Hanlon Returns to Willard InterContinental

Washington, DC, December 3, 2011 -- Pastry Chef Gary O'Hanlon returns to the Willard InterContinental Washington as Executive Pastry Chef. He held the position previously from 2001 through 2005, then relocated to New Orleans as Executive Pastry Chef with the Ritz Carlton, and then to New York to take on the position with the Pierre Hotel. Chef O'Hanlon was glad for the opportunity to return to Washington and rejoin the Willard Hotel to direct the pastry making for *Café du Parc*, and the hotel's award-winning catering and events. O'Hanlon's creations – often inspired by seasonal events, have been featured on Fox Five News, and in other media outlets. His creations have included a 450-pound gingerbread "Santa's Sleigh" and a four-foot chocolate cherry tree in honor of the National Cherry Blossom Festival®.

Chef O'Hanlon grew up in kitchens. His father owned restaurants and cafes in his native Dublin, Ireland. His grandfather was a baker too. By the time he was 15, Chef took the opportunity to apprentice as a baker in the Manning's Bakery. He has studied at Dublin College of Catering and is a graduate of the National Bakery School of Ireland. It was during his training in classical pastries and bread, that Chef O'Hanlon developed his passion for pastry art. In 1990, he accepted his first hotel-based position, leading him to become interested in the operational aspects, as well as the craft of pastry making. During this time he worked with French and Swiss bakers and learned the classical techniques. The classical foundation provided a jumping board for his creativity, as he enjoys mixing flavor combinations and making beautiful sculpture from such simple elements as chocolate and sugar.

Chef O'Hanlon accepted a position in the warm environs of Grand Cayman, where he trained and supervised staff while overseeing the Hyatt Regency's desert production. His next position landed him in Washington DC, where he ascended to the position of Pastry Chef at the Ritz Carlton, Pentagon City. He has handled three Ritz Carlton hotel openings, and a variety of hotel special events throughout the U.S. and Asia. O'Hanlon is the recipient of the *Best Overall* award of *Art to Taste* – a charity which supports lawyers for artists. He was also the recipient of the Ritz Carlton's *5-Star Award* for outstanding service.

Chef O'Hanlon has delighted the sweet teeth of some of the world's most famous people. For basketball legend Michael Jordan's birthday, he fashioned a basketball court cake with strawberry players decked out in marzipan sneakers. The Queen of Thailand loved her chocolate dragon cake – built upon a coconut Dacquoise base, with whole lychees, and layers of tropical fruit mousse. The chef's hand-piped chocolate, fire-

breathing dragon (chocolate flames airbrushed in red), crowned the creation. Several times a year, Chef O'Hanlon highlights his culinary craft in support of local charity events. He prides himself in his ability to encourage coworkers to stretch their creativity to achieve enhanced artistic refinement in their pastry art.

Café du Parc, the popular French bistro located next to the Willard InterContinental, serves breakfast, lunch, dinner, afternoon petit plats, takeout lunch items and house specialty French pastries. Café du Parc embraces true classic bistro cuisine with accompanying French wines. The culinary team is under the guidance consultancy of celebrated Michelin-starred French chef, Antoine Westermann who oversees menu design and absolute quality. During the warm DC spring and long summer months, Café du Parc features Parisian-style outdoor sidewalk seating. Call Café du Parc at: 202-942-7000, or visit www.cafeduparc.com.

The Willard InterContinental is located in the heart of the nation's capital on Pennsylvania Avenue near the White House, the Smithsonian museums and the downtown business and theatre districts. The Willard epitomizes world-class hospitality as the hotel of choice for heads of state and leaders of the world's business, cultural, social and political elite. The hotel's 335 well appointed guestrooms include 41 elegant suites. Dining options include Café du Parc, the popular French bistro with seasonal outdoor seating, the Occidental Grill & Seafood, traditional Afternoon Tea in Peacock Alley and the classic Round Robin Bar. The luxurious Red Door Spa offers a wide array of pampering treatments. An American institution, the Willard has hosted nearly every U.S. president since 1853. It was at the Willard that Julia Ward Howe wrote The Battle Hymn of the Republic, where President Ulysses S. Grant popularized the term "Lobbyist," and where Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King finished his renowned "I Have a Dream" speech. The Willard is also noted for its 100% wind power, recycling and charitable initiatives including Anacostia River clean-up, the hotel's "Adoption" of a Pershing Park, and support of a school prom for disabled youth. The classic Willard InterContinental combines heritage and luxury with contemporary comfort and the latest technology. Tel. 202-628-9100, 1-800-827-1747, or Web site: www.washington.intercontinental.com. Twitter: www.twitter.com/willardhotel; Facebook: www.Facebook.com/willardhotel

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