



## The Flavor of Cincinnati™

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### Nationally Known Artist Paints The Story of Cincinnati-style Chili The Art of Restaurant Brand Differentiation

**July 5, 2010** -- In a town known as **Chilitown USA**, with more than 225 chili parlor restaurants, nearly every restaurant has taken the same approach to presenting the unique dining experience and iconic signature Cincinnati-style chili dishes: generic product photography of cheese coney and 3-way chili spaghetti.

To differentiate its brand advertising and in-store marketing materials, and better articulate its brand positioning as... ***“the restaurant that best understands and promotes the passionate, personal and emotional connection that the people of Greater Cincinnati have with their very own hometown dish, Cincinnati style chili”***...Gold Star Chili, The Flavor of Cincinnati commissioned a nationally known artist, C.F. Payne to visually tell the Gold Star/Cincinnati-style chili story.

Best known for his portraits of the famous and powerful and for his cover illustrations for publications such as *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Readers Digest*, *The New York Times Book Review* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, as well as his book illustrations for celebrity authors such as John Lithgow and Steve Martin, C.F. Payne is recognized by many as, “the Norman Rockwell of his generation.” But even more important than those credentials, Mr. Payne is a Cincinnati native and life-long lover of Cincinnati-style chili and therefore intimately familiar with the city’s irrational attachment to chili, spaghetti, hot dogs, cheddar cheese, onions and hot sauce.

“C.F. Payne was the natural choice for a project like this for the brand that is known as *The Flavor of Cincinnati*,” according to Charlie Howard, Gold Star Chili Director of Marketing. “Mr. Payne a life-long resident of Cincinnati neighborhoods and a Cincinnati-style chili fan. And even though he is best known for his illustrations of famous personalities, the heart of his work is the depiction of everyday people; the kind of regular, hard-working individuals and families who have been Gold Star’s core customers for the past 45 years. This illustration is really a tribute to them.”

After recruiting, posing and photographing real Gold Star Chili customers and employees as illustration models, Mr. Payne’s final product is a panoramic mural depicting a daily slice of life in a Gold Star Chili restaurant, the definitive Cincinnati-style chili experience. From kids having their first cheese coney to teenagers on a first date to family night

dining to returning veterans craving a taste of home, this original painting captures the essence of the Cincinnati-style chili dining experience with emotion, humor and large servings of the food that made Cincinnati famous.

The illustration will be reproduced and installed as a wall mural in select Gold Star Chili restaurant locations throughout the Greater Cincinnati areas. Additionally, five to six close-up out-takes from the illustration will be framed and installed in Gold Star Chili restaurants to help provide an in-store ambiance that visually depicts Gold Star Chili's brand position, The Flavor of Cincinnati. Gold Star Chili will also use the illustration and out-takes in future advertising and marketing initiatives as well as the cover art for the next generation of Gold Star menus.

Based on the success of this project, Gold Star Chili is planning future collaborations with C.F. Payne. Next up, to better leverage Gold Star's NFL sponsorship status as the "Official Chili of the Cincinnati Bengals, over the next four years, Mr. Payne will create a series of paintings that offer a "tribute to Cincinnati Bengals fans." The art will then be applied to upscale Bengals collectible merchandise that will be promoted and sold during football season with the purchase of specific food items targeted to the football fan.

**ABOUT GOLD STAR CHILI**

Greater Cincinnati is Chilitown USA® and Gold Star Chili is The Flavor of Cincinnati®. It strives to be the restaurant that best understands and promotes the passionate, personal and emotional connection that the people of Cincinnati have with their very own hometown dish, Cincinnati-style chili. Gold Star now has nearly 100 restaurants located throughout Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana and operates concessions at Paul Brown Stadium, The Bank of Kentucky Center, Children's Hospital, and the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. To join the Gold Star Chili eClub or for more information, please visit [www.goldstarchili.com](http://www.goldstarchili.com).

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