



Black Women Film Network Introduces New Name, Builds on Legacy

Untold Stories Luncheon Honors Mo’Nique, Jasmine Guy, Shirley Franklin, Maria Howell, Ralph Wilcox and Roger Bobb

Atlanta (February 26, 2010)— Launching the new year with a razor-sharp focus and a refined name for the organization, the Black Women Film Preservation Project changed its name to the Black Women Film Network, to place more of an emphasis on its focus of connecting others with educational and professional resources and contacts in the film, mass communications and entertainment industries. The Black Women Film Network also continues its tradition of supporting students pursuing careers in these fields with scholarships, and celebrating emerging and seasoned professionals in the business through its annual **Untold Stories Awards Luncheon**. The luncheon will be held on April 2 at 11:30a.m. at Atlanta’s Lowes Hotel.

“We’re excited about our 14th year in the community, and our new name represents our commitment to serving as a continued support for Black women and Black filmmakers and artists, in general,” said Founder Sheryl Gripper. “Our scholarship, panels, workshops, film festivals, book festivals, ‘reel’ networking affairs and annual awards luncheon are all intended to be resources that help move Atlanta’s cinematic, mass media and entertainment arts forward as these industries continue to thrive in the region. We also use our awards luncheon to celebrate those who are arts advocates, particularly in the areas of film, mass media and entertainment arts.”

The Black Women Film Network will honor the following major contributors to the region’s arts scene on April 2:

Mo’Nique

An award-winning comedienne whose career began 20 years ago in her hometown of Baltimore, Maryland, Mo’Nique took to the stage for the first time on a dare from her brother. The overwhelming response and standing ovation she received gave her the courage to pursue a comedy career professionally. From there, she gained visibility and immense popularity with performances on "Showtime at the Apollo," HBO's "Def Comedy Jam," "Apollo Comedy Hour" HBO's "Snaps," BET's "Comic View," The Montreal Comedy Festival and Uptown Comedy Club. The host of a nationally syndicated talk show on BET (taped in Atlanta) and an award-winning actress, Mo’Nique has been recognized this year as Best Supporting Actress by the Screen Actor's Guild and Golden Globe Awards.

Jasmine Guy

A celebrated actress, dancer, singer, producer/director, lecturer and arts and social service advocate, Jasmine Guy puts the role of mother at the top of her long list of credits. A consummate performer, Guy has distinguished herself in the industry as a true contemporary artist with her appearance on stage, screen and television. She has spent the past two years in Atlanta on the stage, both as a performer and director. In 2008, Guy directed the 14th Street Theater production of "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf," to rave reviews. In 2009, she starred in the True Colors Theatre Company's productions of "Blues for an Alabama Sky" and "Miss Ever's Boys," and was tapped to direct a new production of "For Colored Girls," starring Robin Givens for True Colors. Currently, she is preparing for her next directorial project for the stage, "The Bluest Eye," in partnership with the Spelman College Drama Department.

Shirley Franklin

Shattering the political glass ceiling in 2001 when she was elected its first female mayor, Shirley Franklin tackled head-on tough urban challenges facing Atlanta. Currently, she serves as Spelman College Cosby professor of social sciences, sharing her perspectives on women in politics, the challenges of urban civic leadership, and lessons learned in forging coalitions locally, nationally, and internationally across lines of

difference, a hallmark of her eight years as Mayor. During her tenure, she was an advocate for the arts and used the city's Bureau of Cultural Affairs to build on its legacy of being a key vehicle for the music, visual and literary arts.

Maria Howell

Singer, Actress, and Voiceover artist, Maria Howell is best known as the choir soloist from the movie "The Color Purple". Throughout her career, she has shared the musical stage with legendary artists like Nancy Wilson, George Benson and Ray Charles. As an actress, she has also appeared in Tyler Perry's "Daddy's Little Girls" and "Meet the Browns" TV show, Lifetime's "Army Wives" and "Drop Dead Diva". After a very successful stint in Asia, Maria relocated to Atlanta, GA and performs regularly at Sambuca Jazz Café.

Ralph Wilcox

A 30-year veteran actor who has appeared in such movies as Silent Victim, The Cape, Point Man, China Moon, Ralph Wilcox also boasts a multitude of television credits in In the Heat of the Night, I'll Fly Away, Sheena and Good Times. He founded the Henny Penny Video/Television Production Company, Inc., a 501 (c-3) non-profit organization, which is a certificate program at Bainbridge College and now offered as an add-on certificate as part of Andrew College's curriculum. He is also the executive producer/CEO of Schusters Cash, LLC, a film/video production company. Wilcox has received various awards such as the 1973 BINACA Award for Best Commercial; the Trailblazer Award in 2005 from the 100 Black Men of Albany, Georgia; and the AGAPE Community Servant Award in February 2007 which he received at the Apollo Theater in New York.

Roger Bobb

With two hit shows (House of Payne and Meet the Browns) currently on the air and eight films having been released in the last four years, all opening at #1 or #2 on their opening weekends, Tyler Perry Studios Supervising Producer Roger Bobb is without question one of the most successful producers working in the film and television industry. He is the Executive Producer of "Meet the Browns," which premiered on TBS as the second highest-rated sitcom in basic cable history. Roger's films include "Diary of A Mad Black Woman," "Madea's Family Reunion," "Daddy's Little Girls," "Why Did I Get Married?", "Meet the Browns," "The Family that Preys," "Madea Goes to Jail" and the recent hit, "I Can Do Bad All By Myself." He recently wrapped production on "Why Did I Get Married Too?," which is scheduled for an April 2010 release, and will soon start his 10th collaboration with Tyler Perry which is the film version of "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide."

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For more information about the Black Women Film Network and the Untold Stories Luncheon, visit www.blackwomenfilm.org.

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