

Legacy of a Civil Rights Icon - Hank Thomas

June 2011 The McDonald's Newsroom

Mary J. Blige Tops List of All-Star Honorees to Receive McDonald's 2011 365Black Awards for Outstanding Community Service

Actress Angela Bassett, Radio Legend Tom Joyner to Co-Host 2011 Awards Program

OAK BROOK, Ill. -- (June 21, 2011) — Continuing its long-standing support and connection to the African-American community, McDonald's will recognize a distinguished list of five prominent African-Americans who influence and inspire greatness through outstanding community service at the 2011 365Black Awards. This year's 365Black Awards will be co-hosted by nationally syndicated radio personality Tom Joyner and Academy Award nominated actress Angela Bassett and will be held Friday, July 1, 2011 at 12:30 p.m. in New Orleans, La., at the start of the Essence Music Festival weekend.

The 2011 365Black Awards honorees are multi-platinum recording artist Mary J. Blige, Oscar nominated and Grammy Award winning actress Ruby Dee, Radio One network founder Cathy Hughes, NAACP president and CEO Benjamin Jealous, and civil rights activist and **McDonald's owner/operator Henry "Hank" Thomas**.

This year's honorees join an elite group of past award recipients, including Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Marian Wright Edelman, ESSENCE Magazine president Michelle Ebanks, educator Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, CNN's Soledad O'Brien and NBA legend Alonzo Mourning. Awards show co-host Tom Joyner was one of the first recipients of the 365Black Awards, which exemplify outstanding community service.

"Our 365Black Awards honorees define true leadership in our community, from Ruby Dee's trail blazing career as an actress to the civil rights crusades led by Hank Thomas; from the media empire created by Cathy Hughes to the leadership that Benjamin Jealous brings to the NAACP, our honorees inspire all Americans to give back in some unique way," said Neil Golden, Chief Marketing Officer, McDonald's USA.

Legacy of a Civil Rights Icon - Hank Thomas

“Through her organization FFAWN, the Foundation for Advancement of Women Now, Mary J. Blige continues to invest in the future of young women and gives them the confidence they need to succeed,” Golden added, noting that McDonald’s is also supporting FFAWN through a charitable contribution.

The 365Black Awards were launched in 2003 and are an extension of McDonald’s 365Black initiative, created to celebrate the pride, heritage and achievements of African-Americans year round. McDonald’s outreach under the 365Black platform includes the web site www.mcdonalds.com/365black, as well as alliances with organizations that provide opportunities for African-Americans to succeed.

“At this year's 365Black Awards, we celebrate not only our distinguished honorees but all that makes the Crescent City truly amazing -- such as the culture, the cuisine and the courage it has taken to rebuild New Orleans,” said Rob Jackson, Director of U.S. Marketing, McDonald’s USA. “The Fleur De Lis has become a popular, multicultural symbol of the rich history of New Orleans, just as McDonald’s 365Black Awards symbolize our longstanding support and commitment to the African-American community.”

The 2011 365Black Awards recipients are:

Mary J. Blige is a singer-songwriter, record producer, actress and winner of ten Grammy Awards and four American Music Awards. Since her 1992 debut, *What's The 411?*, Mary J. Blige has sold more than 50 million albums worldwide. Among her many accolades, Mary can claim eight multi-platinum albums, nine Grammy Awards (she has been nominated for a staggering 29) and four American Music Awards. Mary J. Blige is the cofounder of the Foundation for the Advancement of Women Now (FFAWN), whose mission is to empower women from all walks of life to reach their full individual potential. Her next album, “My Life Too...The Journey Continues” will be released September 20, 2011.

Legacy of a Civil Rights Icon - Hank Thomas

Ruby Dee is an actress, author and producer who grew up in Harlem and began her career as a member of the American Negro Theatre. Recent roles have been in *American Gangster* for which she was nominated for an Academy Award, with Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe; in *Steam* with Ally Sheedy; and in *Naming Number 2*, for which she won a New Zealand Screen Award. In 1988, Ms. Dee was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame and with her late husband, Ossie Davis, inducted into the NAACP Image Award Hall of Fame. She has received several Emmy nominations, and in 1991, won an Emmy for her performance in *Decoration Day*. She has received the Silver Circle Award by the Academy of Television Arts and Science, the National Medal of Arts Award, and the Screen Actors Guild's Lifetime Achievement Award. In December 2004, Ms. Dee and Mr. Davis were recipients of the John F. Kennedy Center Honors. She is also the author of two children's books and *My One Good Nerve*, a book of poetry and short stories (which she has adapted into a solo performance piece). In 2007, she and her late husband received a Grammy Award for the audio book of their joint autobiography, *With Ossie & Ruby: In This Life Together*.

Benjamin Jealous is the 17th president and chief executive officer of the NAACP and the youngest person to hold the position in the organization's nearly 100-year history. During his career, he has served as president of the Rosenberg Foundation, director of the U.S. Human Rights Program at Amnesty International and served as executive director of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a federation of more than 200 black community newspapers. From his early days of organizing voter registration drives up until his nomination and election as NAACP president, Jealous has been motivated by civic duty and a constant need to improve the lives of America's underrepresented.

Cathy Hughes is the founder of Radio One, Inc. Celebrating its 30th anniversary, Radio One is the largest African-American owned and operated media corporation in the United States with 53 radio stations located in 16 urban markets in the United States. It is also the parent corporation of TV One and Reach Media, home of the Tom Joyner Morning Show and Syndication One, home of Reverend Al Sharpton, Russ Parr, Ricky

Legacy of a Civil Rights Icon - Hank Thomas

Smiley and Yolanda Adams. Ms. Hughes served as the chief executive officer of Radio One Inc. from 1980 until 1997. She has held various positions for Radio One including president, general manager, and talk show host since 1980. She began her career in radio as vice president and general manager of WHUR- M, the Howard University-owned, urban-contemporary radio station. She is currently chairperson of the Radio One board of directors and also serves on the TV One board. She is the chairperson of the Small Business Administration's Advisory council on Underserved Communities and serves on the board of BMI, Piney Woods Country Life School and the Wal-Mart External Advisory Council.

Henry "Hank" Thomas is one of four surviving members of the thirteen original "Freedom Riders," the heroic civil rights activists who traveled throughout the South on Greyhound buses in 1961, protesting segregated facilities at bus stations along the way. Today, Thomas is vice president of the Hayon, Inc. Group, which owns and operates three McDonald's Restaurants in the Atlanta area. Mr. Thomas serves on the Board of Trustees of Morehouse Medical School (Atlanta) and Talladega College (Talladega, AL). He has established scholarship funds at the Piney Woods Boarding School, Howard University and Morehouse School of Medicine. He is also a Vietnam War veteran, having received a Purple Heart, a life member of the NAACP, an active fundraiser for the UNCF and a retired member of the 100 Black Men of DeKalb County. In 2011, Hank was inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame.

About McDonald's

McDonald's USA, LLC, is the leading foodservice provider in the United States serving a variety of wholesome foods made from quality ingredients to more than 26 million customers every day. Nearly 90 percent of McDonald's 14,000 U.S. restaurants are independently owned and operated by local business men and women. Customers can now log online for free at any of the 11,000 participating Wi-Fi enabled McDonald's U.S. restaurants. For more information, visit www.mcdonalds.com, for updates on our business, promotions and products.