

Foundation honors American humanitarians

NEW YORK, NY — The Jackie Robinson Foundation hosted its 2008 Annual Awards Dinner at Manhattan's venerable Waldorf-Astoria hotel recently, celebrating the foundation's 35th anniversary.

The star-studded gala paid tribute to individuals who embody the humanitarian ideals of Jackie Robinson and raised funds for the Jackie Robinson Foundation, which provides four year college scholarships and extensive mentoring to academically distinguished minority students with financial need and records of leadership capacity. The event attracted more than 1,100 guests.

Legendary entertainer Bill Cosby served as the emcee once again — a role he has held for nearly three decades.

The iconic event honored world-renowned film producer, director and screenwriter George Lucas, chairman of Lucasfilm Ltd, with the ROBIE Achievement in Industry Award presented by noted actor and Brooklyn-native Jimmy Smits. Higher education trailblazer, President Emerita Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole of both Bennett College for Women and Spelman College received the ROBIE Humanitarianism Award presented by Dr. Camille O. Cosby. And decorated producer, writer and educator and recording industry pioneer and cultural icon Clive Davis, Chairman, BMG Label Group, received the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by Tony-Award winning actress Julie White. Other celebrities attending included Spike Lee, Ahmad Rashad, Howard White



Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole was presented with the ROBIE Humanitarianism Award.

(former basketball star and current Nike executive), Melody Hobson (ABC "Good Morning America" contributor) and Bill Russell.

"Our distinguished honorees have truly embraced Jackie Robinson's guiding tenet, 'A life is not important except in its impact on other lives,'" said President and CEO Della Britton Baeza of the foundation.

"These individuals are extraordinary not only for their profound record of professional achievement but also for their significant commitments to advancing equal opportunity and improving the human condition."

The evening was highlighted by a riveting performance by last year's "American Idol" winner Jordin Sparks.

Chanel Cathey, a Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholar and a senior at Fordham, sponsored by JRF's first and longest-running corporate partner, Unilever, was saluted in a poignant video tribute.

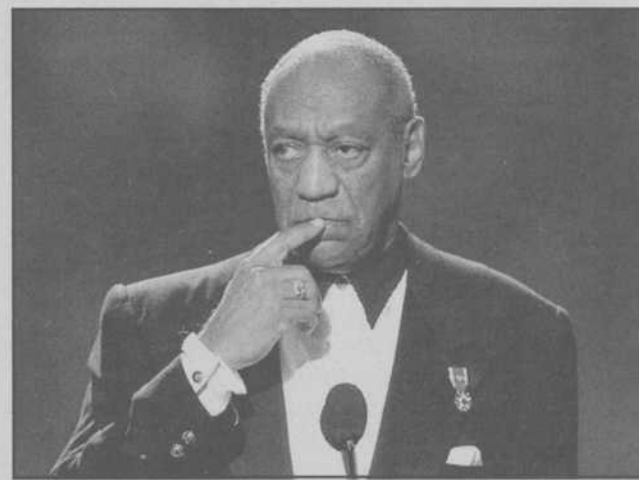
Cathey, an aspiring jour-

nalist, has a profound record of public service. She founded a program that provides job-training and professional development for previously incarcerated teenagers and has launched a culinary arts program for adolescents, creating and implementing curriculum that combines professional culinary training and teaches entrepreneurship and job-training skills.

Established in 1973 by Rachel Robinson, the wife of baseball and civil rights lu-

minary Jackie Robinson, the foundation is the nation's premier education and leadership development program. Transcending financial assistance, the foundation equips its scholarship recipients with a comprehensive set of support services including mentoring, career guidance and practical life skills, resulting in a nearly 100 percent graduation rate, more than twice the national average for minority students.

The nearly 1,200 JRF (See Foundation, Page 6)



The event was hosted by Bill Cosby in celebration of the foundation's 35th anniversary raised over \$1 million.

"What I really need is..."

'Black Magic' tells of hoops evolution

By Kevin A. Booth
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Basketball greats, community leaders, and politicians gathered at the Washington-D.C.-based Reagan Amphitheater in recognition of director Dan Klores' groundbreaking film "Black Magic," which is to air commercial free on ESPN March 16th and 17th.

The film tells the story of the evolution of basketball and the influence that the Black pioneering athletes had on the game during the Jim Crow racism era of American history.

"Athletes broke through in sports before we were able to break through in politics," said civil rights icon, Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. speaking at the opening of the D. C. preview of the film.

Jackson thanked Klores for the film and the pioneering players of the game for their contributions in eliminating the color barrier, and for their greatness that gave "a sense of what America could be," through their efforts on the court.

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