Tyler Perry and Usher Join Morehouse College for 150th Anniversary Week Celebrations

ATLANTA—January 20, 2017—Morehouse College will mark its 150th anniversary with a week of festivities that will include alumni events, a concert by MAZE featuring Frankie Beverly, and appearances by entertainment moguls, Tyler Perry and Usher Raymond, who are among this year’s scholarship gala honorees.

Nearly 5,000 students, alumni, and community supporters are expected to attend Founder’s Week activities. This year’s events will honor the history of the college, its commitment to serving students, and its sesquicentennial birthday.

The festivities begin on Sunday, Feb. 12, with a special “Sesquicentennial Pilgrimage to Augusta” bus trip. Buses will transport alumni to Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta for a family reunion at the birthplace of Morehouse College. The trip will include a special address by Morehouse College President John Silvanus Wilson Jr. ’79, who will challenge alumni to continue their loyal support of their alma mater.

Founder’s Week fun will continue in Atlanta on Monday, Feb. 13, when Morehouse College faces rival Clark Atlanta University at 7 p.m. on the basketball court at Franklin L. Forbes Arena. Then, on Tuesday, Feb. 14, Morehouse’s official birthday, alumni will participate in a “Show Your Love” drive launching Morehouse’s International Giving Day. Morehouse College has received nearly $70 million in donations, grants, and gifts in the past four years under Dr. Wilson’s presidency.

One of the highlights of Founder’s Week will be held on Thursday, Feb. 16. Alumni will honor tradition and gather for the Sesquicentennial Convocation at 10:45 a.m. in the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel. Convocation guest speaker will be alumnus and U.S. Rep. Cedric Richmond ’95, the new Chairman of the Black Congressional Caucus. Richmond, (D-LA), is the first Morehouse alumnus to lead the powerhouse political alliance. He was elected to a two-year term and will head the largest assembly of the CBC in history.

On Friday, Feb. 17, the smooth sounds of MAZE featuring Frankie Beverly will fill the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel. The Sesquicentennial Anniversary Concert begins at 8 p.m. Tickets range from $50 for balcony seats to $250 for VIP seats. They can be purchased at https://frankiebeverly150.eventbrite.com. A sold-out crowd is expected.

Then, on Saturday, February 18, alumni and community supporters will attend a formal fund-raising event at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta to support Morehouse College and student scholarships. The 29th annual “A Candle in the Dark Gala” at 7:30 p.m. will honor the outstanding accomplishments of five men who are leaders in their professions. The honorees are: entertainment giant Tyler Perry, an actor, playwright and philanthropist; Usher Raymond, a Grammy Award-winning singer, dancer, actor and businessman; Jon Platt, President and CEO of Warner/Chappell Music Inc.; Jonathan Walton ’96, Harvard Divinity School professor of religion and society; and Theodore Colbert III ’96, a Chief Information Officer at Boeing.
Honorees are presented with either a “Candle” or “Bennie” award. Candle Award recipients are recognized for excellence in a variety of fields, including athletics, business, education, entertainment, government, law, military service, religion and science and technology. Bennie Award recipients are accomplished graduates of Morehouse. (The award is named for noted educator Benjamin E. Mays, who served as president of Morehouse from 1940 to 1967.) Tickets can be purchased at https://giving.morehouse.edu/gala2017. Table sponsorships are still available.

Closing events for Founder’s Week will be held Sunday, Feb. 19. The day begins with the “Sesquicentennial Founder’s Day Worship Service” at 11 a.m. in the MLK Jr. International Chapel on campus. The service will be followed later by a special 150th anniversary concert featuring the World-Renowned Morehouse College Glee Club. The concert will be held at 4 p.m. at the Ray Charles Performing Arts Center.

For a complete list of Morehouse College Sesquicentennial Anniversary events, visit http://www.morehouse.edu/morehouse150/events.html or morehouse150th.com.

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Ranked America’s fifth “Most Entrepreneurial College” by Forbes Magazine in 2015, Morehouse College is the nation’s largest liberal arts college for men. Founded in 1867, the College enrolls approximately 2,100 students and historically has conferred more bachelor’s degrees on black men than any other institution in the world. Morehouse College is one of the two top producers of Rhodes Scholars among HBCUs. Prominent alumni include Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Peace Prize laureate; Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General; Shelton “Spike” Lee, American filmmaker; Maynard H. Jackson, the first African American mayor of Atlanta, Ga.; and Jeh Johnson, former Secretary of Homeland Security.