

Lynn Whitfield Hosts Awards Gala



Actress Lynn Whitfield, center, who hosted the NBMBAA awards gala Saturday in San Diego is joined by the organization's Chairman Alvin Brown and President and CEO Barbara Thomas. The organization's annual conference, held Oct. 11 – 16, is the country's preeminent event for African American business professionals.

San Diego, October 15, 2005 – National spiritual leader Bishop T.D. Jakes was named the 2005 recipient of the National Black MBA Association Chairman's Award Saturday evening during the organization's awards gala that concluded their annual conference this week in San Diego.

Jakes, the founder and CEO of The Potter's House of Dallas Inc. – one of America's fastest growing mega-churches – accepted the award that recognized his volunteer service and commitment to the organization and its core values of building economic and intellectual wealth for African Americans.

"We are proud to honor Bishop Jakes this year with our organization's highest award," said NBMBAA Chairman Alvin Brown. "Bishop has a long history of supporting and encouraging people, both young and old, to achieve their dreams."

Responding to the devastation suffered in the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina, the NBMBAA launched a Student Empowerment Relief Fund with a goal of raising \$1 million to assist MBA students to cover essential expenses associated with continuing their education. Jakes, who last month was accepting hurricane evacuees at his Dallas facility, made the initial \$25,000 to the fund.

"His contribution to our relief fund is but another example of his selflessness in advancing the mission of the NBMBAA," Brown said.

Jakes is among the most respected ministers in America today. The South Carolina native began his ministry more than 20 years ago with a small congregation of 10 people. Over the years, he has forged a strong reputation as a humanitarian, bridge-builder and best-selling author of more than 16 books. His multi-racial, non-denominational churches are among the fastest growing in the United States.

The black-tie awards program, hosted by actress Lynn Whitfield, was the finale of the group's 27th annual conference and career fair which is widely regarded as America's preeminent event for black business professionals.

Approximately 11,000 people and 368 Fortune 500 companies and business school partners crowded the San Diego Convention Center to participate in the conference's variety of educational discussions, career development and networking events. During the week, nearly \$500,000 was awarded in academic scholarships to high school, undergraduate and graduate students.

"I believe this was one of our most successful conferences yet," said Barbara Thomas, president and CEO of the NMBBAA which is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year. "I am confident that all our attendees have been reinvigorated in their determination to lead with passion, purpose and power," she said echoing this year's conference theme.

The organization had originally planned to hold its 2005 conference in New Orleans. But after Hurricane Katrina's devastation, the NMBBAA was one of hundreds of professional and trade groups forced to move their event from the now evacuated city. After a whirlwind tour of 12 alternative cities in 10 days, the NMBBAA decided to relocate its event to San Diego.

New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin, Dan Packer, president and CEO of Entergy New Orleans; and Xavier University President Dr. Norman Francis remained the conference co-chairs.

Despite the venue change, all 368 corporate sponsors remained committed to the conference. Among those were: Abercrombie & Fitch, American Airlines, Black Enterprise, Citigroup, The Coca-Cola Company, Coors Brewing Co., DaimlerChrysler, Dell, Delphi, ExxonMobil, Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Hewitt Associates, Hewlett-Packard, The Home Depot, IBM, Intel, Marriott, Mars, Microsoft, PepsiCo, Pitney Bowes, Sprint Nextel, Target, Verizon, Wachovia and Walt Disney.

Former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, and the current president and CEO of The National Urban League, praised Jakes. "We all congratulate Bishop Jakes on his receiving this honor from the NMBBAA," Morial said. "We celebrate his achievements and look forward to following in his example of service."

Other awards announced during the conference included:

- H. Naylor Fitzhugh Award of Relevance – Dr. Dennis Kimbro
- Educational Institution of the Year Award – University of Chicago Graduate School of Business
- MBA of the Year – David Harrison
- President's Award for Outstanding Leadership– Dr. William Qualls
- Silver Torch Award- Deloitte Consulting
- Industry of the Year, Automotive – DaimlerChrysler, Delphi, Ford Motor Company and General Motors
- Outstanding Communicator – Julieanna Richardson

- Entrepreneur of the Year – David L. Steward
- *Helping Hands* Award – General Electric African American Forum
- Chapters of the Year – Cleveland/NE Ohio, Columbus, Memphis and New York
- Special Recognition – Antoinette M. Malveaux, Carole Copeland Thomas

The organization, which has 39 local chapters representing more than 100,000 MBA graduates in the U.S., provides employment, professional development and networking opportunities to its members at national and regional events. It's 2006 conference is scheduled to be held in Atlanta. For more information on the NBMBA, please visit www.nbmbaa.org.

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