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**JACKIE ROBINSON FOUNDATION
2009 ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER HONORING
ROBERT REDFORD, ROBIN ROBERTS AND
DR. BENJAMIN CARSON SR. DRAWS 1,000
ATTENDEES AT WALDORF=ASTORIA**

**Entertainment Icon Dr. Bill Cosby Hosts Star-Studded Gala for
Nation's Premiere Minority Scholarship and Mentoring Program**

**R & B Artists Kenny Lattimore Highlights March 16, 2009 Gala with
Electrifying Performance**

**John McGlade, Chairman, President and CEO of Air Products Serves
as Event Chair.**

(New York, New York) – The Jackie Robinson Foundation (JRF) celebrated its 36th anniversary with a star-studded gala at the Waldorf=Astoria on Monday, March 16th. The 2009 JRF Annual Awards Dinner attracted some 1,000 supporters who turned out to see legendary entertainer Dr. Bill Cosby once again host one of the most anticipated events on the New York social calendar. The Foundation bestowed its prestigious ROBIE Awards on three remarkable individuals whose professional achievements and philanthropic commitments reflect Jackie Robinson's commitment to excellence and service. The evening raised funds for the Foundation, which provides four year college scholarships, graduate school grants, extensive mentoring and leadership training to academically distinguished minority students who otherwise would not have the financial resources to attend college.

Robert Redford, Academy Award-Winning Actor, Director, Producer and Human Rights and Environmental Activist received the coveted ROBIE Award for Achievement in Industry presented by Dr. Sheila C. Johnson, philanthropist, entrepreneur and Foundation Board Member. An entrepreneur and trailblazer in the world of cinema, Redford has spent his career giving voice to young filmmakers. In his remarks, Redford recalled being just 10 years old when Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier and remembered being inspired by "how one man could make such a difference not only for baseball but for America."

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Noted journalist and *Good Morning America* co-host **Robin Roberts** was tabbed for the ROBIE Humanitarianism Award presented by Angela Taylor, Vice-President and General Manager of the Washington Mystics. Roberts, a former JRF Board Member, dedicated her award to JRF Founder Rachel Robinson, saluting her “elegance, grace and perseverance.”

The Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award went to **Dr. Ben Carson Sr.**, the pioneering neurosurgeon whose life was documented in the recent TNT movie *Gifted Hands*. The world-renowned physician, educator and Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins University received the award from decorated actor James Pickens, who portrays a physician on the hit television show *Grey’s Anatomy*. In his acceptance speech, Carson told the story of an NPR commentator who had asked why Dr. Carson spoke so infrequently about race. Carson recalled telling the interviewer, “I’m a neurosurgeon. I operate on people’s brains. I open the scalp and I take off the skull and then and only then do I begin to operate on the thing that makes them who they are. It’s not the covering that’s important; it’s what’s inside that’s important.”

The evening also showcased the achievements of Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholars, including three students who served as emcees for the gala. University of St. Thomas senior Tasha Byers, a JRF/Windmill Foundation Scholar who will be continuing her studies at the London School of Economics, has served as a mentor to at-risk students throughout her college career. The former high school valedictorian was raised by a single mother who was one of 20 children and worked as a share crop farmer in Mississippi. Harvard University senior Jackie M. Robinson, a JRF/Coca-Cola Scholar will be heading to San Francisco to begin working with Google advertising. A talented vocalist who performs with Harvard’s Kuumba Singers, he also spent time as a volunteer Mock Trial coach at a Boston High School. Completing the trio was Duke senior Ashley Artis, a JRF/Polo Ralph Lauren Scholar. A mentor for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, she aspires to a career in fashion or advertising and plans to attend business school. Capping the memorable evening was a performance by R & B singer Kenny Lattimore.

The JRF Annual Awards Dinner has recognized some of the most decorated names in business, politics, education, media, sports and the arts, including Bishop Desmond Tutu, J. W. Marriott, Jr., Clive Davis, Spike Lee, Ruth J. Simmons, Henry L. “Hank” Aaron, John Welch Jr., Ella Fitzgerald, George Lucas, Marian Wright Edelman, Arthur Ashe, Michael Jordan, Tom Brokaw, Dr. Sheila C. Johnson and Katharine Graham.

NEWS RELEASE



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Established in 1973, the Jackie Robinson Foundation (JRF) 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% graduation rate, more than twice the national average for minority students. The over 1,300 JRF alumni are both leaders in their professional fields and consummate ambassadors of Jackie Robinson's legacy of community service. This academic year (2008-2009), JRF is providing scholarship assistance and program support to 279 Jackie Robinson Foundation students representing 34 states and enrolled in 106 different colleges and universities across the country.