

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Diana Rodriguez: (212) 290-8600, x29

Gary Schueller: (212) 290-8600, x30

**JACKIE ROBINSON FOUNDATION
TO COMMEMORATE
JACKIE ROBINSON'S BIRTHDAY**

**SHARON ROBINSON & HANNAH STORM
WILL HOST CELEBRITY RECEPTION**

-CUBS LEGEND ERNIE BANKS, ROBINSON TEAMMATE RALPH BRANCA TO ATTEND-

New York, New York, January 16, 2006 -The **Jackie Robinson Foundation (JRF)** today announced it will host a reception on **Monday, January 23rd** from **6pm-8pm** at the **ESPN Zone (Broadway and 42nd Street)** in Times Square commemorating **Jackie Robinson's birthday**. The baseball great was born on January 31, 1919 in Cairo, Georgia. The evening will be sponsored in part by **DiversityInc Magazine** and **UpCountry International**.

The **invitation only** event will be hosted by **Sharon Robinson**, daughter of the trailblazing athlete and **Hannah Storm**, co-host of the CBS Early Show. The evening will pay tribute to the impact the baseball legend had on baseball and society while highlighting the continuing mission of the Jackie Robinson Foundation. Featured speakers will include Sharon Robinson, Hannah Storm and Della Britton Baeza, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Jackie Robinson Foundation. Jackie Robinson Foundation scholars will also be on hand to share with members of the media the impact the Foundation has made in their lives. Profiles of select Jackie Robinson Foundation scholars are enclosed. Sharon Robinson, Storm, Baeza as well as Ernie Banks and Ralph Branca will all be available to the media.

Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball in 1947 with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Over his ten year career, he was named Rookie of the Year (1947), Most Valuable Player (National League – 1949) and helped the Dodgers win six pennants and one World Series in 1955. His heroics began in the confines of the venerable Ebbets Field but spawned cataclysmic social changes that predated Rosa Parks by nearly a decade.

“This event allows us to pay tribute on an annual basis to a man who continues to make a difference in the lives of so many. His actions paved the way for America to move towards becoming a more inclusive society,” said **Della Britton Baeza, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Jackie Robinson Foundation**. “We are proud to keep his legacy alive through the work of the Foundation, its Scholars, Alumni and all our supporters.”

Hall of Famer Ernie Banks, a member of the Foundation's Los Angeles Advisory Committee, will be on hand for the celebration. The effusive shortstop-turned-first-baseman remains a fan

favorite as well as loyal supporter of The Jackie Robinson Foundation. Dodgers icon **Ralph Branca**, one of Jackie's last surviving teammates, will attend the celebration as well. Branca has been an active and energetic philanthropist since his retirement, working on a variety of Baseball Assistance Team (BAT) initiatives along with his commitment to The Jackie Robinson Foundation. Media personality **Maurice DuBois** of **WCBS-TV** in New York will round out the celebrity attendance list. DuBois has been a familiar face at recent Foundation events, including

JRF's Golf Classic, which took place last September at The Lake of Isles Club at Foxwoods Resort Casino.

Invited guests to the reception include **Rachel Robinson**, wife of Jackie Robinson and Founder of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, acclaimed film director **Spike Lee**, New York Mets General Manager and Manager, **Omar Minaya** and **Willie Randolph**, and **George Bodenheimer**, President of ESPN.

Founded in 1973, the Jackie Robinson Foundation is a public, not-for-profit national organization launched by Rachel Robinson as a vehicle to perpetuate the memory of Jackie Robinson and his achievements. It provides four year college scholarships as well as educational and leadership development opportunities for students of color with strong capabilities, but limited financial resources. The Foundation strives to assure that the legacy of Jackie Robinson's commitment to social justice will be carried forth in the personal, community and institutional lives of these individuals as they assume leadership roles throughout society.

This academic year (2005-2006), JRF is providing more than **\$1.8 million** in scholarship support to **266 Jackie Robinson Scholars** representing **33 states**. Enrolled in **93 different institutions**, Jackie Robinson Scholars attend some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the United States and maintain a **97% graduation rate**, highest among comparable programs.

For additional information on the Jackie Robinson Foundation, its programs and events, please contact JRF at 3 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001, or call (212) 290-8600. You may also visit the Foundation's official web site at www.jackierobinson.org.

###

Marcus Ellison



College: New York University

Year: Junior

Major: Entrepreneurship, Social Justice and The Black Community

Hometown: Scarborough, Maine

Sponsor: Deloitte

Marcus Ellison is the executive director of the New York branch of the Student Relief Organization (SRO), a non-profit organization co-founded by his twin brother and dedicated to providing experiential learning and development programs that benefit disadvantaged youth. SRO has programs in Boston and New York. During the developmental stages of the program, Marcus would frequently spend every weekend traveling to Boston building the organization. He would return on an overnight bus arriving to New York early Monday morning just in time to meet his commitments to an internship at Deloitte, the company which sponsors his scholarship.

Fourteen years ago, Marcus Ellison found himself and his family homeless after his father was sent to jail. He and his two brothers were living off pop-tarts and stale bread in an abandoned house on a sparsely populated island in Casco Bay, located in the Gulf of Maine. Though homelessness was temporary, being poor was not. Marcus's experience growing up would shape his entire outlook on life, success, and purpose.

In the fall of 2005, Marcus' Student Relief Organization launched a program at one of New York's most under-privileged high schools. Through this program, SRO will provide economically disadvantaged high school students with a means towards self-improvement and actualization. Reflecting on his own years in poverty, Marcus recounts the instinctual nature that many of these young people are forced to live by. It's often about survival. His program in New York, called the Professional Opportunity Program, is trying to change this. This year long program incorporates one-on-one mentorship (with local small business owners acting as mentors) and team activities that foster growth and community building. Beginning in February, students undergo professional workshops on a diverse array of topics ranging from writing and speaking skills to college prep. In the summer these same students are then awarded high caliber paid internships. Throughout the program students are required to perform community service in their own communities so that they learn what it means to improve the communities they're coming from. Marcus believes that we go to school and we receive our education in order to be able to pursue more fulfilling lives. The Professional Opportunity Program is about giving the opportunity for fulfillment to lives that are often over looked. In his own words, "The purpose of knowledge is action. But the purpose of understanding is living."

In addition to his non-profit work, he has his own development and realty company, which he launched with a fellow college student, Frank Saulter. Still in its infancy, the company has already raised \$1.1 million and is engaged in large-scale development projects in Texas. Marcus is currently interning with Deloitte in strategy and operations consulting.

Chanel Cathey



College: Fordham
Year: Sophomore
Major: Communications
Hometown: Bridgeport, Connecticut
Sponsor: JRF/Unilever

Chanel Cathey is a sophomore at Fordham University with an intended double major in communications and media studies and political science. She is passionate about journalism, advertising, politics and social justice.

At Fordham she is the president of Women in Communications. Chanel has brought the on campus club from dormant to a vibrant student chapter boasting over 150 active members. Through this club, she produces a newsletter, holds career oriented workshops and facilitates trips into Manhattan to attend discussion forums with prominent communications leaders in television, film, theater, journalism and public relations. Chanel is a contributor to the literary magazine. She is an editor at Fordham's newspaper *The Ram*. She has also worked on the writing and production staff for *Fordham Nightly News* crew and currently is writing a script for her own television show for the campus television station. A leader in the local community, Chanel is part of Urban Plunge, a volunteer emersion program that acquaints freshmen with organizations that are in need of assistance.

In 2004, she graduated from Notre Dame Catholic High School in Fairfield with honors. At Notre Dame, she had numerous leadership roles including treasurer of the Student Council, President of the Care Club, Secretary at the American Red Cross and Treasurer of the National Honors Society.

During her freshman year in high school, Chanel's sister, Donna Cathey offered her the opportunity of a lifetime. She commissioned Chanel to co-develop a pre-employment curriculum for previously imprisoned teens. At fourteen years of age, Chanel was given a project many college graduates would have desired. This project fell under the auspices of Our Piece of the Pie [OPP] (a nonprofit organization in Hartford, Connecticut that works with adjudicated youth). The organization sought Chanel's perspective to help adult facilitators communicate job skills to an adjudicated audience. Chanel needed to create a foundation for her assignment and therefore met with the teenagers she was addressing. She spent hours interviewing teens who have endured detention centers and rehabilitation centers, taking notes about their educational and social experiences. At fourteen, Chanel was analyzing deep emotional social distresses such as divorce, murder, addiction, criminal behavior, teenage pregnancy and welfare. By the age of fifteen, she helped formulate the numerous interviews and possible strategies into a comprehensive manual for job training. The curriculum takes into account lifestyle, culture, educational exposures and social experiences and lays out a format to communicate necessary job skills like business etiquette, and dressing for success. The curriculum was awarded the prestigious National PEPNET award by the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Youth Employment Coalition. It was presented at President Bush's National Youth Conference in November 2003.

Chanel still does freelance projects with O.P.P. on a volunteer basis and is preparing a youth video production to market various youth businesses throughout the Connecticut region. Chanel aspires to be a broadcast journalist, covering important issues like disease, famine, natural disasters, and national and international politics.