

Toyota HBCU New York Classic Announces 2023 Impact Award Recipients

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Toyota HBCU New York Classic today announced six individuals, including Robert F. Smith, Dia Simms, Janice L. Mathis, Esq., Jacqie McWilliams-Parker, Graham "Skip" Dillard, and "People's Choice" nominee Marlon Myers, were chosen to receive a 2023 HBCU Impact Award for their positive impact on HBCUs, diversity, inclusion, and justice. Each recipient has made extraordinary contributions to the African American community, urban culture, and the world.

"I am truly honored to have the privilege of presenting these exceptional individuals with the Impact Award this year, as their remarkable contributions have left an indelible mark on our world," said Albert Williams, President & CEO of Sports Eleven05 .



Known as the world's largest HBCU Homecoming, the HBCU New York Classic is a multi-day celebration of HBCU culture and community activities that culminates with two Historically Black Colleges and Universities' (HBCUs) football teams facing off at MetLife Stadium. Each year, the parent company of the Classic, Sports Eleven 05, LLC, and its Board of Directors, select a group of distinguished individuals and corporations to receive the HBCU Impact Award for the work they have accomplished in support of HBCUs and their historic mission.

Robert F. Smith is the Founder, Chairman and CEO of Vista Equity Partners. Vista manages equity capital commitments of over \$100 billion with a portfolio of over 80 companies that employ more than 95,000 people worldwide. Smith has been named one of the TIME 100 Most Influential People in the World (2020) and recognized by Forbes as one of the 100 Greatest Living Business Minds. In 2019, Smith eliminated the student debt of 400 Morehouse College graduates and later founded Student Freedom Initiative to relieve the burden of student debt for STEM students at HBCUs. His firm, Vista Equity Partners, is a founding partner of Southern Communities Initiative, a catalytic consortium of mission-aligned partners working to accelerate



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racial equity in the six Southern communities home to more than half of all black Americans.

Dia Simms serves as the CEO of Lobos 1707 Tequila & Mezcal, an award-winning, independent spirits brand that launched in November 2020. In May 2021, Simms Co-Founded Pronghorn, a 10-year initiative to drive diversity, equity, and inclusion in the spirits industry. Pronghorn is a template on how to effectively diversify any industry by cultivating the next generation of Black entrepreneurs, employees and executive leaders within the spirits industry through sustainable investment, incubation and recruitment. Simms spent almost fifteen years working

alongside Sean "Diddy" Combs at Combs Enterprises, starting in 2005 as his executive assistant. In 2017, Simms was named President of Combs Enterprises, making her the first president in the company's thirty-year history other than Sean Combs himself.

Janice L. Mathis, Esq. was named General Counsel of the National Council of Negro Women in April 2023, and previously served as Executive Director of NCNW, where she initiated social media and expanded NCNW's agenda to include social justice, entrepreneurship, estate planning, and the HBCU College Fair. She also instituted Good Health WINs, the nation's largest network of trusted messengers addressing social determinants of health in the Black community. Previously, Janice was General Counsel and Vice President of Rev. Jesse L. Jackson's Rainbow PUSH Coalition and the Citizenship Education Fund (CEF), where she led efforts to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act and implemented a shareholder education program resulting in new employment, contracting and board seat opportunities for African Americans.

Jacqie McWilliams-Parker has served as the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Commissioner for over 10 years and has worked for the CIAA for a total of 15 years. Although she is the first female to serve as Commissioner for the CIAA and first appointed African American female Commissioner representing NCAA Division I, II and III, she is pleased that there are currently three other Black women serving as the commissioner at every level.

Graham "Skip" Dillard is the Brand Manager/Program Director for Audacy's WXBK-FM, 94.7 the Block in New York City. Prior to WXBK, Skip spent 12 years Programming NYC's legendary Urban AC WBLS and Gospel WLIB. Dillard serves on several non-profit boards including the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, American Foundation for the University of the West Indies and Advisory Board for the Living Legends Foundation. Skip is currently serving his 2nd term with the Communications Equity and Diversity Council for the Federal Communications Commission; promoting increased opportunities for Minorities and Women in Media Management and Ownership.

These honorees will join the company of Vice President Kamala Harris, Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, John Mara, Spike Lee, Sean “Diddy” Combs and Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter, who were all honored with the 2022 Impact Award. New this year is the “People's Choice” recipient, who was chosen by an internal committee for his work with youth in black and brown communities of New York.

29-year-old Marlon Myers is a graduate of New York City College of Technology (City Tech), where he served as the president of the Black Male Initiative Club and program ambassador. Marlon is currently employed as the “I.T and Operations Manager” at Brooklyn Community Foundation. He is a board member of “500 Men Making a Difference,” and served as their director of Collegiate engagement. He is the organization’s youngest recipient of the “Man of The Year Award 2016”. 500 Men Making A Difference is a New York-based non-profit that provides mentorship, community service, and civic engagement opportunities that assist with growth of the black and brown communities of New York.

Following an incredible first year hosting the event at MetLife Stadium where over 35,000 fans attended, the HBCU New York Classic will return to MetLife on Saturday, September 16, 2023. Celebrating all the tradition and pageantry of the HBCU game day experience, this year’s match-up features Morehouse College vs. Albany State University. Kickoff is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. ET. The HBCU NY Classic game will be presented live on CNBC, Peacock, and the NBC Sports App. For more information, or to purchase tickets go to www.hbcunyclassic.com.

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