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Contemporary Gospel Chart Topper, Kirk Franklin, To Help YMCA Salute Greater Cincinnati Achievers In June

One of the most recognizable names in contemporary Gospel music, Kirk Franklin will be coming to Cincinnati June 22 to help the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati honor local achievers selected by businesses. Mr. Franklin will be the featured speaker at the 29th annual YMCA Salute to Black Achievers Banquet. The Event is one of the area's largest programs that honors professionals of color and seeks their partnership in impacting young students.

Mr. Franklin is a Billboard Magazine top charting gospel singer who has been named the biggest selling contemporary Gospel artist in sound scan history. Since his 1993 debut, he has won three Grammy, 33 Stellar and nine Dove Awards. He is celebrated for weaving very different musical influences – R&B, modern rock, hip-hop, pop, jazz, and gospel – into a seamless fabric. Indeed, one of his many highlights is his mainstream 1995 multi-format smash “Stomp.”

What Mr. Franklin shares with many who are impacted through the Salute to Black Achievers is his entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to youth. In addition to his singing success, he founded Fo Yo Soul Entertainment, Inc. His enterprise, including a full-service youth outreach initiative, and advertising agency and production company, is a multi-tiered relationship with Zomba/BMG, that includes a new record label.

“All of our honorees are people who are committed not only to their career, but also to their community. They are professionals who can be strong role models for our youth,” said Toni Miles, executive director of the YMCA's Black Achievers Program. “In addition to their being recognized at our banquet, our honorees will be helping us year round to positively influence hundreds of young people.”

The Salute to Black Achievers Banquet will begin at 6:30 p.m. on June 22, 2007, and will be held at the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati. In addition to Mr. Franklin, P. Ann Everson and the Super Childrens Choir will also make a guest appearance. Registration for the Banquet is \$75 per ticket. VIP tickets are \$125 and include the pre-reception with Mr. Franklin. For sponsorship or banquet information, the public should call 513-362-YMCA (9622) or visit www.MyY.org.

Salute to Black Achievers provides financial and human capital for a year-round teen program focused on college readiness, academic achievement, and career development. Adult Achiever honorees are expected to work with the Black Achievers Program and serve as mentors for the youth participants. The 2007-2008 goal for the program is to serve over 500 young people in the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky communities.

About the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati

The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is the area's largest non-governmental, non-profit community services organization providing safe and nurturing environments for people of all ages, regardless of their ability to pay. More than 43,000 kids, 52,000 families, and 14,000 teens are served each year in a broad range of programs, including mentoring, youth leadership, and volunteerism through community outreach initiatives that promote the character values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is also the Tri-state's largest provider of childcare, serving people of all faiths, races, ages and incomes.

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