



For Immediate Release

AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL CONCLUDES IN SOUTH BEACH WITH GALA FILM LIFE MOVIE AWARDS SHOW

AOL Time Warner Chairman and CEO Richard Parsons Presents Special Award to Russell Simmons and Gabrielle Union Receives AOL Time Warner Rising Star Award

***HBO Presents its Short Film Competition Winner
Lincoln Presents the Lincoln Filmmaker Award and
Blockbuster Presents the Blockbuster Audience Award***

South Beach, FL, June 27, 2003 – Film Life’s Seventh American Black Film Festival (ABFF) culminated in South Beach, Florida on Saturday with the star studded Film Life Movie Awards Show sponsored by Lincoln. AOL Time Warner presented its Innovator Award and Rising Star Award to special honorees Russell Simmons and Gabrielle Union, respectively and winners of the Festival’s HBO Short Film and independent film competitions were announced during the gala awards show in the Jackie Gleason Theater.

A list of Hollywood celebrities, including, Cedric the Entertainer, Eriq La Salle, Jill Marie Jones, Jim Brown, Elise Neal, James McDaniel and Reginald Hudlin presented awards to independent filmmakers and actors at the Film Life Movie Awards show which was hosted by actor/director Robert Townsend and “Access Hollywood’s” Shaun Robinson. AOL Time Warner Chairman and CEO Richard Parsons made a surprise appearance to pay tribute to entertainment mogul and activist Russell Simmons. Actress Gabrielle Union was presented with the AOL Time Warner Rising Star Award. Olivia Smashum, senior vice president of subscriber marketing and business development, HBO, presented the grand prize to the winner of the HBO Short Film Award.

“We are delighted with the success of this year’s Film Life Movie Awards,” said Jeff Friday, president and CEO of Film Life, Inc. and ABFF festival director. “The show provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the world of independent filmmaking, as well as the work of established Hollywood icons. Congratulations to this year’s Film Life Movie Awards show winners. We look forward to televising the show next year so that this salute to Black cinema can be shared with the largest audience possible.”

Following are the various awards and their winners:

- ◆ The AOL Time Warner Innovator Award to Russell Simmons.
- ◆ The AOL Time Warner Rising Star Award to Gabrielle Union.

- more -

Film Life Movie Awards

- ◆ The HBO Short Film Award to *Swallow*, written and directed by Frank E. Flowers who receives \$20,000 from HBO.
- ◆ The Lincoln Filmmaker Trophy award to *Skin Deep*, which was directed by Sacha Parisot. Parisot receives a two-year lease of a Lincoln Navigator.
- ◆ The Blockbuster Audience Award for Best Feature Film to *All About You*, which was written and directed by Christine Swanson, a 1998 winner of the HBO Short Film Award. The winner receives a \$15,000 prize from Blockbuster and DEJ Productions.
- ◆ Best Performance by an Actress award presented to Janice Richardson for *Anne B. Real*. *Essence* and Movado sponsors this award and provide prizes to the winner.
- ◆ Best Performance by an Actor to Steve White for his performance in *Skin Deep*. Phat Farm sponsors this award and provides prizes to the winner.

This year's Film Life Movie Awards show also featured a stirring performance from Arista recording artists Kenny Lattimore and Chante Moore and a special presentation from Suehir Hammad from the Tony Award winning "Def Poetry Jam." Previous Film Life Movie Award show participants and honorees have included, Mekhi Phifer, Samuel L. Jackson, Keenan Ivory Wayans, Chris Tucker, Denzel Washington, Halle Berry, Morgan Freeman, Pam Grier, Debbie Allen, Suzanne De Passe, John Singleton and Robert Townsend.

AOL Time Warner is the presenting sponsor of the ABFF and HBO is the founding sponsor. The Festival's platinum sponsor is Lincoln. *Essence*, *Heineken* and *Upscale* are gold sponsors. *Black Enterprise*, Blockbuster and Miramax Home Entertainment are silver sponsors. Official sponsors include, ABC Inc., American Airlines, AT&T, AXA Financial, BET, CBS, Daily Blossom, dv Republic, ENYCE, Florida Lottery, Fox Broadcasting, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, Kodak, Martell Cognac, Maverick Entertainment, the Mayors Office of Film and Entertainment, Miami-Dade County, LuxeConcierge, Movado, Motorola, NBC, Nielsen Media Research, Phat Farm and UrbanWorks Entertainment.

Jeff Friday is a cofounder of the ABFF, which is now solely produced by Film Life. Friday has served as executive producer of the ABFF since its inception in 1997. Formerly known as the Acapulco Black Film Festival, the international film market attracts more than 2,500 attendees annually. This year marks the festival's second year in South Beach.

Film Life, Inc. is a film marketing and distribution company based in New York and established by Jeff Friday. Its mission is to spearhead the commercial development of independent Black films.

AOL Time Warner is the world's leading media and entertainment company, whose businesses include interactive services, cable systems, filmed entertainment, television networks, music and publishing.

####

Artwork Available.

Contact: Chelsye J. Burrows
Film Life, Inc.
720.635.7965
cjbpr@aol.com