

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sheila Johnson to speak at PBCC King Celebration Jan. 14

Martin Luther King Leadership Awards will be presented to Faith*Hope*Love*Charity, Inc.; Florida Gulf Coast University President Wilson G. Bradshaw; Sharon Gill, founder of Oasis Compassion Agency and PBCC Student Erin Hayes

(Lake Worth, Fla. – Jan. 8, 2010) Sheila C. Johnson, CEO of Salamander Hospitality in Virginia and a co-founder of Black Entertainment Television, will be the keynote speaker at Palm Beach Community College's 11th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Breakfast Jan. 14.

The breakfast will be held at 7:30 a.m. (the program begins at 8 a.m.) in the Martin Luther King Plaza at PBCC in Lake Worth, 4200 Congress Ave. The theme is "Dream. Act. Serve." It is free and open to the public. WPEC Channel 12 news anchor Liz Quirantes will serve as mistress of ceremonies.

As CEO of Salamander Hospitality, Johnson oversees a growing portfolio of luxury properties including Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club (a 900-acre, 72-hole resort) near Tampa. Johnson is the only African-American woman to have ownership in three professional sports teams: the WNBA's Washington Mystics, the NBA's Washington Wizards and the NHL's Washington Capitals. She serves as president and managing partner of the Mystics.

During the celebration, the College will present Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Awards to:

Sharon Gill, who walked away seven years ago from a high-paying job at a law firm she established with her attorney husband to launch a clothing and food pantry at small church. In 2003 she established Oasis Compassion Agency, a nonprofit agency in Greenacres that has helped over 4,200 families, representing 12,000 men, women and children.

Wilson G. Bradshaw, Ph.D., president of Florida Gulf Coast University and alumnus of then-called Palm Beach Junior College, who has impacted the education of tens of thousands of students. Growing up in segregated West Palm Beach, he learned early the value of hard work and education. He got his first job as a seventh-grader delivering prescriptions for Frederick's Pharmacy, the city's only black pharmacy.

(more)

Erin Hayes, a PBCC student who as president of Kappa-Delta Omicron chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society on PBCC's Lake Worth campus, introduced Cause of the Month, in which PTK would give an entire month to researching and raising awareness and funds to support a specific cause, such as hunger and poverty.

Faith*Hope*Love*Charity, Inc. is a nonprofit organization founded in 1994 by Roy J. Foster, who was recently received a CNN Hero award, and the late Don Reed. The organization provides family support services to active-duty military personnel and veterans, including emergency monetary assistance, legal service referrals and family counseling. In May 2000, the doors of Stand Down House were opened. Stand Down House provides a multi-tiered program with emergency/ transitional housing and supportive services to assist homeless veterans struggling with alcohol/drug addictions, lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), mental and physical limitations. Currently, the Stand Down House provides housing for 45 veterans.

For more information on the celebration and the honorees visit www.pbcc.edu/mlk.xml.

Palm Beach Community College will become Palm Beach State College on Jan. 12. Serving more than 49,000 students annually, it is the largest institution of higher education in Palm Beach County, providing the bachelor's degree, associate degrees, professional certificates, career training and lifelong learning. Established in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, it offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade.

Editor's note: Please contact the Office of College Relations and Marketing for a high resolution photo of Sheila C. Johnson.

Media contact:

Tabatha B. McDonald
College Relations and Marketing Specialist
(561) 868-3127