



Visionary Artist Rallies Prominent African-American Entrepreneurs to Save Art Programs in Schools

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CAPE COD, Mass. , Nov 30, 2009 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Social entrepreneur and celebrity artist Merletta J. Martin launches a new venture, the Black Legends Series(TM), to help fund art programs in schools. Leveraging relationships with influential African-American entrepreneurs, best-selling authors and media personalities, Martin seeks to address two critical issues among African-American students: high dropout rates and diminishing funding for art programs.

Through the Black Legends Series, a line of motivational greeting cards and related products, Martin is inspiring people of all ages with insightful quotes from notable African-Americans and artwork from Merletta J. Martin Gallery. The gallery donates a portion of all series proceeds to help support art programs in schools and provides youth art training.

Some of the legends participating in the series include: Dr. Jackie Mayfield, Co-Founder of COMPRO-TAX, Inc., the largest African-American owned tax preparation firm with over 220 offices throughout the United States; George Fraser, CEO of FraserNet, Inc., the #1 network for Black professionals worldwide reaching over 1 million people; and Dr. Ed Robinson, former Board Member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia.

"I believe the Black Legends Series presents a special opportunity for generations of people to learn from the legends' successes. As we face a critical juncture in our nation's history with our schools and economy in crisis, now is the time for us to make a positive change," says Martin. "School boards and administrators are facing unprecedented financial challenges and must make difficult decisions about which programs to cut. As we continue to gain needed support from individuals, the media and business community, it is our hope that we can provide some necessary relief so that schools do not have to make these burdensome decisions." Featured legend and CEO of The Baron Solution Group William R. Patterson says, "Ms. Martin is doing a tremendous service. It is heartbreaking to know that some students won't have the same opportunities as others, or to consider the cultural void left by not helping students to develop their artistic talents.

Having spent years in schools implementing youth financial literacy programs, we know how important it is to keep students inspired and engaged. When Ms. Martin approached us, there was no question; we had to get involved." The ultimate goal of the Black Legends Series is to help ensure that students have a broad and full education that enables them to be more competitive in the global marketplace as well as live happier and more fulfilling lives.

For more information on the Black Legends Series and to help support art programs in schools, visit <http://www.blacklegendseries.com> .

Merletta J. Martin is President of Black River Management, Inc., which operates BlackLegendSeries.com, ArtInHarmony.com and Merletta J. Martin Gallery. She is also Executive Producer and Host of the "Painting with Merletta" television show.

Black River Management, Inc.

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