



Contact: Melody M. McDowell –Chief Information Officer -Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
773-660-2001 – Office 312-371-8917 – Cell
melodyaka@aol.com - e-mail

**A DAZZLING ARRAY OF ACHIEVERS TO BE HONORED
BY ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY**

**Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Surgeon General Regina Benjamin,
rapper/entrepreneur Jay Z and local leader Peggy LeCompte among honorees**

Chicago, Illinois – June 24, 2010 - Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority will present awards to a distinguished panoply of achievers during the organization's Public Meeting, which will be held on Sunday July 11 at 4PM, at the America's Center in St. Louis. The Public Meeting is one of a host of events that will be held during the Sorority's convention, which takes place from July 9-16.

The honorees hail from all over the globe and have excelled in diverse fields of endeavor but are bound by their commitment to excellence and their passion for service.

International President Barbara A. McKinzie will preside over the awards ceremony along with Mae C. Carr, international chairman of Alpha Kappa Alpha's Honorary Members/Awards Committee.

Those who will be honored and the award they'll receive include:

International Service Awardees:*

**Her Excellency the Right Honorable Michaëlle Jean, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.,
Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada** - As governor general, Ms. Jean, a native of Haiti, plays a major role in recognizing the importance of Canada's military at home and abroad.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia and the first woman to head an African nation, has led a distinguished career spanning nearly four decades in the private and public domain in Liberia and internationally. She was inaugurated on January 16, 2006, as President of Liberia and is waging a successful campaign to lead the nation to prosperity after decades of war.

Founders' Graduate Service Award

Ms. Peggy Lewis LeCompte is a retired educator in the East St. Louis, IL School District, where she worked in the area of literacy and language arts. She is a former television talk show host and columnist for the *Crusader*, *Pure News*, *East St. Louis News Journal and Monitor Newspaper*. Peggy is currently the President and CEO of LeCompte Unlimited and a columnist for the *Limelight Newspaper*. She is also immediate past national president of Top Ladies of Distinction. As a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Ms. LeCompte has served as Central Regional Director – two terms, International Secretary, International Membership Chairman, Secretary of the Educational Advancement Foundation, chairman of the Policy Committee and she served on numerous other committees. Currently, she serves as chairman of the Central Region Heritage Committee.

Ethel Hedgeman-Lyle Undergraduate Service Award

Ms. Lauryn A. Pollard is a senior at the University of Southern California. She is an outstanding member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority whose commitment to service reflects the spirit of the award, which is named after one of AKA's founders.

Carey B. Preston Leadership Award

Ms. Faye B. Bryant is a past international president of Alpha Kappa Alpha. In her 55 years as a member, she's distinguished herself in leadership roles at local, state, and national levels in educational, civic, and religious arenas. In 2008, during the Sorority's Centennial Year, she served as chairman of the Centennial Celebration, which was hailed as one of the most outstanding events in the Sorority's history. In addition to serving Alpha Kappa Alpha, she has worked with the Houston Independent School District where she's left a mark as counselor, Magnet School Coordinator, and Associate Superintendent. She retired as Executive Deputy Superintendent. Her dynamic mentorship of young professional educators, as well as teenagers, earned her recognition as a caring and concerned individual. She currently serves as a commissioner on the Houston Archeological and Historic Commission having been appointed by former Mayor Bill White. As The Third National President of Top Ladies of Distinction, she remains an active participant. At her Church, Wesley AME, she volunteers as a substitute teacher for its Noon Bible Study Class and as a member of the ME Rickmeyer Missionary Society.

Septima Poinsette Clark Award

Vice Admiral Regina M. Benjamin, M.D., M.B.A. the 18th Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service. As America's Doctor, she provides the public with the best scientific information available on how to improve their health and the health of the nation. Dr. Benjamin also oversees the operational command of 6,500 uniformed health officers who serve in locations around the world to promote, protect, and advance the health of the American People. Dr. Benjamin is Founder and former CEO of the Bayou La Batre Rural Health Clinic in Alabama, former Associate Dean for Rural Health at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine in Mobile, and immediate Past Chair of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States In 1995, she was the first physician under age 40 and the first African-American woman elected to the American Medical Association Board of Trustees. She served as president of the American Medical Association Education and Research Foundation and Chair of the AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs (CEJA). In 2002 she became president of the Medical Association-State of Alabama, making her the first African American female president of a State Medical Society in the United States.

Septima Poinsette Clark Award

Lisa A. Newman, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S is a surgical oncologist, Associate Professor of Surgery and Director of the Breast Care Center for the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Dr. Newman's primary research has focused on ethnicity-related variation in breast cancer risk and outcome, the evaluation and management of high-risk patients; broadened applications for induction chemotherapy, and special surgical techniques. Her basic science research and her extensive work have won her respect and admiration. She maintains a very active community service record, and currently serves as Chief National Medical Advisor for the Sisters Network, Inc., a national African American breast cancer survivors support organization.

Rosa Louise Parks- Coretta Scott King Award

Ms. Clara Kirk is the founder and president of the West Englewood United Organization (Clara's House Shelter, Clara's Second Stage Housing and Clara's Academic Center) in Chicago, IL. Her energy and dedication to the service of her community led to the establishment of this organization in 1983. As an employee of the Chicago Public Schools System, Ms. Kirk completes her duties at the Robert Fulton School, arrives at Clara's House to begin daily operations of the facility. Each year during the month of November she personally dedicates a day to feed and clothe the homeless. Ms. Kirk devotes many hours to block clubs and community organization meetings in high crime areas. She is affectionately known as the "Mother of Englewood"

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt Medallion of Honor

Mr. Shawn Corey Carter, better known as **Jay-Z**, is an American rapper and businessman. He is one of the most financially successful hip-hop artists and entrepreneurs in America -- having had a net worth of over \$500 million in 2009. He has sold 40 million albums worldwide while receiving ten Grammy Awards for his musical work. He is the music-producing mastermind behind some of the biggest selling, most listened-to tracks of 2009. Jay-Z co-owns The 40/40 Club, is part owner of the NBA's New Jersey Nets and is also the creator of the clothing line Rocawear. He is the former CEO of Def Jam Recordings, one of the three founders of Roc-A-Fella Records and the founder of his Roc Nation. His philanthropic activities include combating global water shortage in partnership with the United Nations. Along with Sean "Diddy" Combs, Jay-Z pledged \$1 million to the American Red Cross' relief effort after Hurricane Katrina.

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

International President Barbara A. McKinzie will bestow President's Awards upon the following military and legislative leaders who have embodied in word and deed, the noble devotion to service.

Brigadier General Belinda "Brenda" Pinckney – U.S. Army

During her long and successful military career, General Pinckney has served in a host of key military positions that culminated in her being nominated by the Army to become a general. She was the first woman in the history of the Army Finance Corps to be promoted to a general officer and the first ever person to be nominated from the comptroller field. Her first major assignment was as the Deputy Director, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, which is the largest finance and accounting operation in the world.

Brigadier General Velma "Von" Richardson, U.S. Army Retired, is vice president of Department of Defense Information Technology Programs at Lockheed Martin in Washington, D.C. In this role, she supports Washington-based DoD Chief Information Officers and other IT leaders in identifying priorities, increasing program visibility, taking new technology directions and recommending innovative IT solutions. Richardson manages executive branch customer relationships with the senior leaders in the U.S. Military, Defense Information Systems Agency and Office of the Secretary of Defense. In addition, she assists Lockheed Martin business units with customer relations and helps program managers overcome funding challenges to develop cost-effective and competitive proposals. During the past two years, Richardson has focused on corporate priority and key DoD IT programs. She is also a strong advocate for Warfighter information technology and systems.

Brigadier General Julia J. Cleckley - As the Special Assistant to the Director for Human Resource Readiness, she assists the Director with Human Resources programs and policies affecting the Army National Guard and its more than 350,000 citizen soldiers. She was the first woman to be assigned as the Chief, Human Resources Officer for the Army National Guard, where she was responsible for providing personnel, manpower, health programs, policy guidance and resources to enable the 54 States and Territories to achieve optimum levels of personnel readiness. She is the first African-American female line officer to be promoted to Brigadier General in the Army National Guard. She was also the first African-American woman to be promoted to the rank of Colonel in the Army National Guard's Active Guard Reserve (AGR) program and the first woman to be assigned as division chief at the National Guard Bureau.

Brigadier General Barbaranette T. Bolden is the J8, Mobility Assistant for United States Pacific Command. She is responsible for assisting the Director for the Resources and Assessment Directorate (J-8) by advocating for future capabilities and forces to accomplish the United States Pacific Command's mission, oversee joint experimentation and studies and analyses to fill United States Pacific Command's capability gaps, and assist with the command's planning and programming efforts.

Brigadier General Allyson R. Solomon is the Assistant Adjutant General for Air, Maryland National Guard, Baltimore, Maryland also serving as A-1, Assistant to the Director, Air National Guard. As Assistant Adjutant General for Air, she serves as the Governor and Adjutant General of Maryland's principal advisor on matters pertaining to the Maryland Air National Guard. General Solomon also serves as the Commander of the Maryland Air National Guard, commanding an authorized strength of 1,539 officers and airmen with 17 A-10 and 8 C-130J aircraft. She is responsible to the Adjutant General for the overall management of the flying program and ensuring the units of the Maryland Air National Guard are organized, equipped, and trained to support federal and state missions. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Major General Marcelite J. Harris, U.S. Air Force, Retired, is director of maintenance, deputy chief of staff, logistics, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. She organizes, trains and equips a work force of more than 125,000 technicians and managers, and maintains the \$260 billion plus Global Reach-Global Power aerospace weapons system inventory. She

develops maintenance policy, ensuring the readiness of the single largest element of manpower supporting Air Force combat forces worldwide. She determines and defends an annual budget of more than \$20 billion to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Office of Management and Budget and Congress. She has held a variety of assignments, many of which resulted in "firsts" for women in the Air Force. She was the first woman aircraft maintenance officer, one of the first two women air officers commanding at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the first woman deputy commander for maintenance. She also served as a White House social aide during the Carter administration.

International President McKinzie will also present President's Awards to:

**Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, United States Representative, (Texas),
Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, United States Representative, (Texas) and
Congresswoman Diane E. Watson, United States Representative (California)**

McKinzie applauded the trio of legislators for their advocacy, outspokenness and for promoting Alpha Kappa Alpha's service mission through their support of legislation aimed at helping those to whom the Sorority renders service.

In announcing the names of the awardees, McKinzie said:

“Alpha Kappa Alpha is proud to acknowledge, support and pay tribute to these exemplars of excellence by presenting them with these awards. In the spirit of ESP, they are Emblematic of the ideal Success Profile because of their achievements.”

About Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is America's first Greek-letter organization founded in 1908 for African-American college women. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, it is one of the world's leading service organizations. The Sorority's members have made a commitment “to serve all mankind” through a nucleus of more than 250,000 women in 975 chapters in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, Germany, Korea, Japan and in the continent of Africa. Barbara A. McKinzie is the 27th International President and will preside over the conference. For more information on the exhibit, log on to www.aka1908.com.

- ##### -

- A complete profile of each honoree and their photos are available upon request.