

ABFE Announces the Inaugural Class of Connecting Leaders Fellows

10 Emerging Leaders from across Philanthropy Selected for Year-Long Fellowship in Professional Development

NEW YORK, NY – Oct. 7 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE) recently announced the names of ten fellows who will participate in the 2005-2006 Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program. This fellowship is the cornerstone of ABFE's multi-year initiative to develop the next generation of leaders in philanthropy and to significantly increase philanthropic resources that are targeted to meet the challenges of Black communities.

"Our members felt it was imperative to take the lead in promoting the professional development of people likely to have both personal and professional interests in the well-being of Black communities," said Tim Russell, a senior manager at Sara Lee Corporation in Chicago and chair of ABFE's Board of Directors. "As part of our strategic plan, we recognized that, in order to get more philanthropic leaders to understand the individual role that they must play, there has to be more development, more training and in turn we expect more philanthropic resources directed towards improving Black communities."

The 2005-2006 class includes: Tonya Allen (Skillman Foundation); Andrea Anderson (The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change); Susan Taylor Batten (The Annie E. Casey Foundation); Rudy Guglielmo (Arizona Community Foundation); Rahsaan Harris (The Atlantic Philanthropies); Obiel Leyva (The San Francisco Foundation); Toya Randall (Grand Victoria Foundation); Erika Seth (Donor to Associated Black Charities -MD); Phillip Thomas (Woods Fund of Chicago); and Akilah Watkins (The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta). Each fellow will receive mentoring supports from seasoned leaders, a professional development stipend, and leadership coaching during the fellowship year.

ABFE is the oldest affinity group of the Council on Foundations. Since 1971, ABFE has promoted sustainable philanthropy in Black communities and encouraged Black leadership and participation within organized philanthropy.

Our activities include:

- * *Championing diversity in grantmaking institutions*
- * *Forging strategic partnerships*
- * *Recognizing and celebrating innovative philanthropic leadership*

* *Sponsoring lectures and workshops.*

For more information about ABFE, log on to our website at www.abfe.org.

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