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African American Historymakers Launch 2nd Annual Back to School Program

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Chicago (August, 2011) – On Friday, September 23, 2011, as students across the country begin the new school year, 500 *HistoryMakers* will return to school to bring renewed attention to the needs of the nation's education system and their students. These *HistoryMakers* and schools are part of the nationwide 2nd Annual Back To School program sponsored by *The HistoryMakers*.

The HistoryMakers is the nation's largest African American video oral history archive. With the 2nd Annual Back To School With *The HistoryMakers* program, living African American *HistoryMakers* will descend upon schools in nearly 109 cities and 35 states across the country to recount their own school experiences and the struggles they encountered on their paths to success.

2nd Annual Back To School With *The HistoryMakers* participants include: Massachusetts Governor **Deval Patrick**, former Ambassador **Andrew Young**, actor/rapper **Common**, singer/actress **Melba Moore**, Broadway choreographer **George Faison**, poet **Nikki Giovanni**, actress **Marla Gibbs** (*227*, *The Jeffersons*), Ambassador **Carol Mosely-Braun**, actress **T'Keyah Crystal Keymah** (*Living Color*, *The Cosby Show*) and poet/author **Sonia Sanchez**.

The goal of the 2nd Annual *Back to School With The HistoryMakers* program is to put black leaders in direct contact with young people all across the nation to tell their stories and to encourage students to excellence.

The *HistoryMakers* Founder and Executive Director, Julieanna Richardson, states, "By bringing these living legends into the schools, we are raising awareness about the achievements of the accomplished African Americans in local communities and bringing these leaders into schools to see things firsthand."

Richardson is encouraging educators across the country to use multimedia resources such as *The HistoryMakers'* digital archive to enrich their students' exposure to the contributions of African Americans in every community.

Last year, as part of the inaugural Back To School With *The HistoryMakers* program, 200 HistoryMakers went back to 107 schools in 25 states and 50 cities. Participants included: former Ohio Congressman **Louis Stokes**, Civil Rights activist **C. T. Vivian** and broadcast journalist **Carole Simpson**. In Washington, D.C. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan joined Civil Rights activists **Rev. Al Sharpton** and **Roger Wilkins** at the Dorothy I. Height Community Charter School. In New York, CNN's **Soledad O'Brien** spoke with former Mayor of New York **David Dinkins** at the Harlem Children's Zone. Through our efforts we were able to reach over 25,000 students and many of our HistoryMakers have adopted the schools since then which was what we were hoping would happen. The response was phenomenal.

The HistoryMakers is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit dedicated to recording and preserving the personal histories of well-known and unsung African Americans. To date, the organization has interviewed over 2,000 HistoryMakers, with the goal of creating an archive of 5,000 interviews (30,000 hours) for the establishment of a one-of-a-kind digital archive, and priceless educational resource.

For more information, visit *The HistoryMakers* website at www.thehistorymakers.com (<http://www.thehistorymakers.com/>) and *The HistoryMakers* digital archive at <http://www.idvl.org/thehistorymakers> (<http://www.idvl.org/thehistorymakers>).