



Honoring Public Servants & Leaders Empowering Our Youth Now!

NEWS RELEASE

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**CELEBRATION OF LIFE AWARDS TO RECOGNIZE RED BANK EDUCATOR, JOURNALIST AND
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST**
***Proceeds from the Gala Awards to the Teen Life-Style Enrichment Programs
and Lupus Foundation***

Princeton, NJ – Gilda Rogers, a Red Bank educator, journalist and community activist, is one of the 24 honorees who will receive a 2007 Celebration Of Life Annual Inc. (C.O.L.A.) on Saturday, October 27th at the Historical Newark Museum, 49 Washington Street. The event will begin at 6 p.m.

Rogers will receive a "*Leaders in the Community Award*" for her dedication and commitment to making a difference in the lives of youth and their families. She is the director of the school-based Youth Services Program at Red Bank Regional High School and founder of the Beyond Group Public Relations Firm.

She is the author of the soon to be released new book, "Arrested Development: The State of Black Achievement and Education in Hip Hop America," which links the decline of African-American progress in education with the incline of hip-hop into America's pop culture. The book surveys the African-American community's first great debate, held between Tuskegee Institute founder Booker T. Washington and scholar W.E.B. DuBois, about whether African-Americans should value the development of the mind or the acquisition of material possessions and monetary gain. It also explores the Harlem Renaissance, the first cultural explosion of African-American art and literature, in a probe about how the DuBois-Washington debate played out artistically.

Rogers' work is the culmination of her study at Monmouth University, where she earned her master's degree in history in 2006. Rogers, who also holds a bachelor's degree in English from Kean University, worked as a columnist and sports reporter for the Asbury Park Press and was later recruited to serve as managing editor at Y.E.S. Magazine (Youth Excited about Success) and City News, an urban African-American weekly. She also is a contributing writer for "Odyssey Magazine, *Travel in Color.*" Rogers teaches as an adjunct professor of African American history at Brookdale Community College in Long Branch.

Cynthia Missouri, the CEO and Founder of C.O.L.A., said "Rogers commitment to our youth exemplifies the spirit and mission of COLA. We are dedicated to empowering and educating our heroes who are making a difference in their communities across New Jersey."

Among some of this year's C.O.L.A. honorees are Bishop Donald Hilliard Jr., Senior Pastor of the Cathedral International Church, located in Perth Amboy, Asbury Park and Plainfield, NJ; Rita Owens, mother of actress – rapper Queen Latifah and art teacher at the Frank H. Morrell High School in Irvington, NJ.

This event will be hosted by Caryl Lucas, a 2006 C.O.L.A. recipient, journalist and motivational speaker. She was formerly a news reporter with the Star-Ledger and served as Communications Director for the Department of State.

Founded in 2004, C.O.L.A. Inc. has a very clear vision of becoming a national movement that encourages and inspires people to live their best lives now. "We publicly recognize phenomenal women, men, and children who give so much of themselves to lead and help others," said Missouri, a Somerset resident.

A portion of the proceeds from the event will go to the C.O.L.A. Foundation for youth and adult scholarship, the "Teen Life-Style Enrichment Program" designed to empower youth across the globe and other non-profit organizations such as the Lupus Foundation; the Sister Network of Central NJ.

The 2007 COLA honorees were nominated in seven categories including: leaders in the community, outstanding achievements, academic expansion, acts of kindness, amazing faith, starting over and Talent-In-Action. The nominations are reviewed and hand selected by a community of prominent men and women.

Among the event's sponsors are the Cablevision; The Cathedral International; NUVO for Her; National Staffing Association; Executive Wardrobes; Image by Missouri, and Vsti Corp.

For tickets to the event, please call 732 821-0093 General admission is \$100.00 and VIP seating is \$150.00. To register for COLA, visit: <http://whoscoming.com/COLA Awards>.

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