



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Nicole Neal
McDonald's USA, LLC
(630) 623-2901 office
(773) 415-3696 mobile
nicole.neal@us.mcd.com

Carolyn Tucker
Burrell Communications
(312) 297-9875 office
(773) 710-0311 mobile
ctucker@burrell.com

**MCDONALD'S® HELPS CELEBRATE ESSENCE MUSIC FESTIVAL'S
RETURN TO NEW ORLEANS**

OAK BROOK, Ill. (July 5, 2007) – McDonald's® joins the Essence Music Festival back in New Orleans with a full-scale celebration, featuring refreshing entertainment and life-enhancing activities.

"McDonald's is proud to be a part of the Essence Music Festival's return to New Orleans," said Carol Sagers, Director of U.S. Marketing, McDonald's USA. "McDonald's continues to support programs that are important to the customers we serve and the Essence Music Festival presents an amazing opportunity for our customers to celebrate music, culture and have fun. McDonald's is deeply rooted in the African American community and proud to be part of the fun at the Essence Music Festival."

The Essence Music Festival series of concerts at the New Orleans Superdome kick off on July 5 with Grammy award-winning artist Smokie Norful, headliner of the McDonald's Inspiration Celebration Gospel Tour earlier this year. During the Festival, McDonald's will host performances by Kenny Lattimore and Chante Moore, Angie Stone, Elisabeth Withers, Sunshine Anderson and Najee at its "Superlounge" mini-concerts, also held at the Superdome each evening.

During the Essence Music Festival, McDonald's will host its 365Black® Awards, the company's tribute to African American business and community leaders who impact life for African Americans 365 days a year.

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The 2007 365Black Awards honorees will be feted at a special luncheon celebration, hosted by former CBS News “The Early Show” co-host René Syler, on July 5 at the Ernest Morial Convention Center. The 2007 honorees include children and families advocate Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President of the Children’s Defense Fund; magazine maven Michelle Ebanks, President, Essence Communications, Inc.; global charity leader Linda Dunham, McDonald’s Owner/Operator and Chairman of the Board, Ronald McDonald House Charities®; and community supporter Roy Griggs, Louisiana-based McDonald’s Owner/Operator McDonald’s.

McDonald’s is host to a variety of activities at the Convention Center activities happening at the Ernest Morial Convention Center, with three full days of entertainment, including appearances by R&B artist **Bobby Valentino**, model **Toccara Jones**, choreographer **Laurie Ann Gibson** and comedian **Joe Clair**.

Highlights of McDonald’s schedule of Convention Center activities at the Essence Music Festival include:

July 5th, 6th and 7th, Ernest Morial Convention Center

- The “I’m Lovin’ It® Fashion Show,” hosted by America’s Next Top Model Season 3 contestant **Toccara Jones** along with *ESSENCE Magazine’s* **Pamela Edwards** and **Agnes Cammock** from 10:00 a.m. to noon. (July 5th and 6th only)
- “Lunch and Laughs” with comedian **Joe Clair**, giving visitors a refreshing comedy break everyday from noon to 1:30 p.m.
- Celebrity choreographer **Laurie Ann Gibson** teaching the latest dance moves each day from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.
- A mini-concert featuring R&B artist **Bobby Valentino**, performing hits from his latest album, *Special Occasion* each day from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

About McDonald’s

McDonald's USA, LLC, is the leading foodservice provider in the United States serving a variety of wholesome foods made from quality ingredients to millions of customers every day. More than 80 percent of McDonald's 13,700 U.S. restaurants are independently owned and operated by local franchisees. For more information about McDonald's visit www.mcdonalds.com.

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