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**Southern Heritage Classic founder to be honored by U of M student group**

University of Memphis, Memphis, TN, (January 8, 2010) After 20 years of promoting the Southern Heritage Classic, Fred Jones Jr. will be the twentieth recipient of the Authur S. Holmon Lifetime Achievement Award. The award will be presented by the University of Memphis Black Student Association on Tuesday, February 2, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Michael D. Rose Theatre.

For many, Jones is synonymous with the Southern Heritage Classic, the annual football clash between Jackson State University and Tennessee State University. But, Jones, like the Classic he founded over 20 years ago, is much more than just a game. The veteran Memphis concert promoter and one-time Isaac Hayes business manager, has a history of making extensive contributions to the Memphis community. In addition to growing his vision of an annual grudge match between two southern football teams into a cultural celebration, the Classic extends far beyond the football field and includes activities such as music, philanthropy and fashion.

A native Memphian, Jones grew up in the Cleaborne Homes housing projects. A 1966 graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, he worked during the day and went to school at night to earn his bachelors degree from the University of Memphis (then Memphis State University) in 1971.

Jones's professional experiences over 40 years include associations with a roster of wellknown, first-class talent including Isaac Hayes, The Isley Brothers, Prince, Bill Cosby, The Commodores, Stevie Wonder, Parliament-Funkadelic, Luther Vandross, LL Cool J, Count Basie, Tyler Perry, Jill Scott, Erykah Badu, Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, The O'Jays, Usher, and hundreds more. He also assembled national blues and jazz tours for several international companies. He's an owner/limited partner of the Memphis NBA team, the Memphis Grizzlies. With all that he has accomplished, Jones considers his most fulfilling business endeavor to be the Southern Heritage Classic.

I've had a lot of fun throughout my career and I've had the pleasure to work with hundreds of fascinating, talented people, Jones said. But there is no thrill for me bigger than getting to hand

Jackson State University and Tennessee State University checks every year after the Southern Heritage Classic Celebration knowing that money will be used by schools that really need and deserve the support.

Jones, who started promoting the event in 1990, said that it was always his goal to create a Super Bowl kind of event where you had the football game and all these other things were around the game.

Today, his annual Classic brings Super Bowl-like crowds to the Liberty Memorial Stadium. The event draws more than 50,000 people to the game most years, as well as thousands of tailgaters. The Classic generates more than \$12 million annually for the Memphis economy.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was first awarded in 1991 to honor Memphians whose lives exemplify outstanding dedication to the Memphis community and who are a constant reminder to today's student that hard work and dedication are true keys to success. In February 1996, the award was renamed the Authur S. Holmon Lifetime Achievement Award in honor of a longtime University of Memphis Administrator.

The Award Ceremony begins the University of Memphis's month long celebration of Black History Month. During the ceremony, the 2010 Black History Month poster will be unveiled, along with the month's official calendar of events. The program will be immediately followed by the Annual Black History Month Opening Reception featuring music from Trio Plus in the Rose Theatre Lobby. Both are free and open to the public.

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