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THE TAVIS SMILEY SHOW FROM PRI CELEBRATES 5 YEARS ON THE AIR

Smiley announces the Sheryl Flowers Scholarship at Clark Atlanta University

LOS ANGELES (April 15, 2010) – Tavis Smiley’s nationally-syndicated The Tavis Smiley Show from Public Radio International (PRI) will celebrate its fifth anniversary Thursday, April 29, with the announcement of a scholarship in honor of its founding executive producer who died last year.

The Sheryl Flowers Scholarship at Clark Atlanta University (CAU) will be awarded to a student who plans to pursue a career in public radio broadcasting. Flowers, Smiley’s longtime executive producer died June 8, 2009, after a two-year battle with triple negative breast cancer.

Smiley will mark the anniversary by donating $25,000 to establish the scholarship at Clark Atlanta University where Flowers attended school. The school will match Smiley’s contribution for a total of $50,000.

“Sheryl’s life calling was public radio,” said Smiley. “I would not be a television host on PBS if it had not been for Sheryl’s vision and incredible insight to help us connect with public radio listeners first. I am who I am in public broadcasting, in part, because of Sheryl. Through her genius, she had a unique way of guiding and teaching others. This scholarship at Clark Atlanta University preserves her legacy.”

Flowers first teamed up with Smiley as his senior supervising producer for The Tavis Smiley Show on National Public Radio (NPR) in 2002. After three years at NPR, Smiley departed in 2004 and partnered with Public Radio International with Flowers as his executive producer, starting with just two radio stations on board. The show is now heard on 90 stations around the country with about one million listeners.

This fall one junior or senior student from CAU will be awarded a financial scholarship and internship at both the school’s campus radio station, WCLK 91.9 FM and with The Tavis Smiley Show from PRI in Los Angeles.
“Sheryl Flowers’ legacy is one of excellence, keen intellect, and all-around awareness of the issues that affect people and how they live their daily lives. This scholarship and internship,” said Clark Atlanta University President Carlton E. Brown, “will not only ensure that her legacy will be upheld, but allows students here at her alma mater the opportunity to stand in her footsteps and, even in spirit, upon her very strong, compassionate shoulders. We are truly grateful to the The Smiley Group for their benevolence and their vote of confidence in the next generation of leaders.”

The Tavis Smiley Show from PRI debuted on April 29, 2005 and is a high-energy exchange of views, information, and insights. The two-hour weekly show offers a unique blend of news and newsmakers in expanded conversations, along with feature reports and regular commentators such as Cornel West, Connie Rice, and Omar Wasow.

"All of us at PRI are honored by our partnership with Tavis and our distribution of The Tavis Smiley Show, now celebrating five years,” said PRI President and CEO Alisa Miller. “Whether on air or online, Tavis brings intellectual rigor and wide-ranging insight to public media. His show is a sterling example of how PRI content enables listeners to 'hear a different voice.' We look forward to expanding the partnership over the next five years and well beyond."

A special Earth Day program airing the weekend of April 16 features U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, Van Jones, former White House advisor for Green Jobs who is now senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, and The Roots drummer Ahmir Khalib “Questlove” Thompson, member of the in-house band for Late Night with Jimmy Fallon.

On tap for the fifth anniversary, a special two-hour program airing the weekend of April 30, Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty and veteran actor Ed Asner (TV’s “Lou Grant”). Additional guests include music producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis and band leader Kevin Eubanks, soon departing from The Tonight Show with Jay Leno after eighteen years.

For more information, visit www.tavistsmileyradio.com.

Editor’s Note: The anniversary show will record in the Sheryl Flowers Radio Studios in Los Angeles at 9 a.m. and the check presentation to Clark Atlanta University will take place at 11:15 a.m. For media credentials, contact: Leshelle Sargent, lsargent@tavistsmiley.com.

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ABOUT THE TAVIS SMILEY SHOW FROM PRI

The Tavis Smiley Show engages commentators and guests in substantive and provocative discussions on a wide range of topics including: politics, health, finance, sports, technology, and pop culture. The show’s hallmark is an insightful exploration of the issues that matter from fresh, diverse points of view. Tavis Smiley was named to TIME’s list of 100 “Most Influential People in the World.” The Tavis Smiley Show is produced by Smiley Radio Properties, Inc. and is supported in part by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This 2-hour program airs weekends on local public radio stations nationwide. To get local listings, please visit: www.tavissmileyradio.com