

KANSAS CITY KEYS COMMUNITY COUNCIL, INC

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Harrel Johnson named local hero by BET and Southwest Airlines

President of the Kansas City Keys to be honored for outstanding community service as part of the annual BET Honors program planned for January 17 in Washington, D.C.

Kansas City, MO (Jan. 13, 2008) — Harrel Johnson, President of the Kansas City Keys Community Council, Inc. has been selected by the Black Entertainment Television (BET) and Southwest Airlines to receive a Community Service Award as a “**Southwest Airlines Local Hero.**” The awards program will be held on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2009 at the Warner Theater in Washington, D.C. The local heroes will receive an all-expenses paid trip and tickets to the BET Honors event.

This year’s BET Honors event will recognize **B. Smith**, (Entrepreneur), **Erving Magic Johnson**, (Corporate), **Judith Jamison**, (Education), **Tyler Perry**, (Media), **Mary J. Blige**, (Entertainment), and **Congressman James E. Clyburn** (Public Service House Majority Whip – 3rd Highest Ranking Democrat in the House). This is a Black-Tie event to be hosted by Gabrielle Union and feature performances by some of the most talented recording artists.

Johnson is one of five recipients nationwide chosen for the Local Hero’s award. Recipients were selected based on nominations from BET viewers who were asked to nominate individuals doing good work in their communities and improving the lives of people around them. Mr. Johnson was nominated for the award unbeknownst to him by his sister, **Survunah Johnson**.

Survunah felt the spirit of this award described the contributions and impact that her brother, Harrel has had on the lives of Kansas City area youth for over 25 years. She wrote, “*When we were children my brother stated he would grow up and have a 100 children and feed them one gallon of milk a day. While my brother had only three children he has served over 100 times that amount with the programs he has provided through the Kansas City Keys; through coaching, board responsibilities, tournament coordinator, youth program director, education facilitator, mentor and leader. Over the years, more than 300 youth in the Keys programs have received scholarships for advanced education.*”

As a basketball coach, Johnson has logged countless hours taking kids to educational and sporting events throughout the country as part of travel teams. His teams have finished in the top 10 in National tournaments over 10 different times and he has successfully coached three National Championship teams. He is one of the few coaches whose boys and girls teams have finished in the top three in the nation. In February, for the last 16 years, he has coordinated one of the largest regional competitive basketball tournaments for youth ages 5-14 in Kansas City.

Johnson was previously selected by the *The Kansas City Globe* as one of the 100 Most Influential Kansas Citians. He has served as the Nike Team Coordinator for the Regional area and received a Coach of the Year Award from the Missouri Valley Regional Association. He has also served as the area coach for the annual McDonald’s Regional High School All-Star games.

Johnson is a member of Palestine Missionary Baptist Church and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha – Beta Lambda Chapter. He served six years in the Air Force Reserves and has worked 26 years as a government accountant. He is married to Dianna Johnson.

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