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BLACK WOMEN'S AGENDA CELEBRATES AWARENESS & ACTIVISM

AT 35TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM LUNCHEON

Special Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett and Congressional Black Caucus Members Join Organization in Saluting Accomplishments of Health, Education, Economic Development and International Affairs Advocates

WASHINGTON, DC – September 21, 2012 -- Four extraordinary women – a preeminent breast cancer specialist, family advocate, educational policy expert and promising international affairs student – were honored today by the Black Women's Agenda (BWA) at its 35th Annual Symposium Luncheon held in the nation's capital. Special guest Valerie Jarrett, Special Adviser to President Barack Obama and Chair of the White House Council on Women and Girls, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and the presidents of numerous national women's organizations joined the organization in saluting the honorees.

“In today's society, Black women have the formidable task of protecting, projecting and producing not just for their families and sisters, but also of helping to lift up our nation and insure its continued greatness,” said Gwainevere Hess, president, the Black Women's Agenda, Inc. “What our honorees have accomplished on a personal level is truly impressive, and the work they commit themselves to every day, to educate, encourage and empower others is awe-inspiring.”

Founded in 1977 in Washington, DC, the Black Women's Agenda is a national non-profit organization that generates support and awareness for issues that secure, advance and protect the rights and well-being of Black women and their families. It is comprised of 19 collaborating women's organizations – sororities, civic, service and faith-based – representing millions of women nationally and worldwide. Through the development of a social priorities agenda, BWA facilitates discussions that promote effective policies and meaningful change.

The 2012 Black Women's Agenda honorees are:

●**Dr. Ragsbert Phillips** – A renowned surgeon, Dr. Phillips is at the forefront of breast cancer research. In 1989 she founded Sisters...By Choice, Inc., an Atlanta-based breast cancer organization that has been cited as an innovative leader in education, awareness, support and resources for women diagnosed with breast cancer.

● **Valerie Peterson Owens** – an author, motivational speaker, entrepreneur, mentor and mother, Peterson Owens is the executive director of Very Positive Outlook, Inc., a fatherhood and family consulting group. Founded in 2004, Very Positive Outlook provides a resource tool for education programs, family service agencies and other entities interested in encouraging fathers to become more involved in their children’s academic growth and success.

● **Michelle Asha Cooper, Ph.D.** – President of Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), one of the world’s premier research and policy centers, Dr. Cooper has dedicated her career to ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students. As head of IHEP, she oversees the organization’s expansive research portfolio and innovative programmatic activities focusing on access and success, accountability, diversity, and finance. Dr. Cooper has also raised millions to help IHEP identify new solutions for our nation’s most pressing educational concerns and identified new strategies that address persistent challenges among students.

● **Claire Crawford** – A freshman at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs, Crawford hopes to one day play an active role in promoting peace, understanding and opportunity in the global arena. A native of Lithonia, GA, Crawford graduated from the Woodward Academy where she was the recipient of the Gold Eagle Award for academic excellence and the Woodruff Spirit Award. She has traveled to China, Belgium, Switzerland, England, France and Germany as a participant in the People to People Student Ambassador’s Program and is pursuing a major in international affairs at GW, with a focus on Conflict and Resolution.

Prior to the luncheon, the BWA partnered with General Electric’s (GE) Healthymagination initiative to host a workshop to educate Black women on triple negative breast cancer, an aggressive form of the disease which disproportionately affects Black women, as well as breast cancer prevention and care. Earlier this year, the BWA and GE officially launched the “All Faces” Campaign to build a grassroots movement to reduce breast cancer health disparities in the African-American community.

For additional information about the Black Women’s Agenda, please visit www.bwa-inc.org.

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