Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission Honors Juneteenth Trailblazer

Popular Broadcaster Hosted Juneteenth Celebrations in the Nineties

For Immediate Release

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Little Rock, Arkansas-The Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission, a division of the Arkansas Department of Education, honored Broadway Joe Booker with the 2021 Juneteenth Inspiration Award. Booker, a broadcaster for Power 92, was recognized for his contributions to Arkansas by hosting inaugural Juneteenth Celebrations in Central Arkansas. Mr. Booker hosted Juneteenth events in the nineties which drew thousands from across the state to several concert venues in Little Rock, Arkansas. Joe Booker, a native of South Carolina, began his broadcasting career in the military in 1976. He began as an announcer in the Armed Forces Korean Network. After relocating to Arkansas, he attended Arkansas State University and earned an associate degree and later concluded his studies at Arkansas Baptist College with a Bachelor of Arts in African- American Community Leadership.

"Mr. Booker spearheaded the original central Arkansas Juneteenth celebration, which inspired other organizations across the state to host similar events," says DuShun Scarbrough. Now that we are celebrating the first official Juneteenth as a federal holiday, we felt it was appropriate to acknowledge Mr. Booker's contributions to the celebration. Not to mention, he participates in several outreach projects across the state and assists the Commission in promoting the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

President Joe Biden, on Thursday, June 17, signed a bill commemorating the end of slavery in the United States, as a federal holiday.

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<u>Broadway Joe Booker</u>

Joe Booker has become a leading radio personality in Central Arkansas, known to many as "Broadway Joe." Some of the highlights of his career include receiving *Billboard & Radio Records* station of the year nomination; two consecutive terms as sergeant-at-arms of the *National Black Programmers Coalition*; impact Program Director of the Year Award and also, nominee in the same category for *Billboard and Records*; started *Blues on the River* (1999) and *Juneteenth* (2000) as promotional events for KOKY and Power 92 (*donating over $140,000 to the Watershed, Inc.*);

raised over 2 million dollars with the Power 92 Jammers Charity Basketball Team; and Power 92 won the prestigious *NAB Marconi Radio Award* for medium market station of the year in the nation and *Billboard's Distinction* for radio station of the year.

Music is a great part of Broadway Joe's life, and so is humanitarianism. Every year he makes contributions to local charities by donating his time and talents to benefit the community. Some of the community services include: Power 92 Jammers Charity Basketball Team, Jacksonville Mighty Viking's *(one of the 48 teams under the Independent Youth Football League)*, Watershed, Inc. annual Christmas Food Drive, Little Rock's Crisis Team and Gang Task Force, Board Member on the O.K. Program *(a national mentoring model for African-American men and boys)*, and many others.

About Juneteenth

Known as America's second Independence Day, Juneteenth is a special celebration for communities around the United States. A combination of "June" and "nineteenth," Juneteenth is a holiday that recognizes when slaves were informed that they were free two years after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. On June 19,1865, two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger, rode into Galveston, Texas with news the war had ended and the slaves in Texas were now free. Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States.