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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The LeMoyne-Owen College Presents its “2008 Beacon of Hope Awards” to Photojournalist Ernest Withers and to Phi Delta Kappa - Beta Eta Chapter

MEMPHIS, TN – August 19, 2008 – On Thursday evening of this week, photojournalist Ernest Withers will be recognized posthumously as the 2008 recipient of The LeMoyne-Owen College’s ***Beacon of Hope Award***. The award was established in 1998 to recognize individuals and organizations that have enriched the College and the community through their service, generosity and/or scholarly contributions.

Withers, who passed away a year ago at the age of 85, is being recognized for his tremendous contributions to the world and to his community through documentation of the critical years of the civil rights movement from the 1950s through the 1960s in his pictures and writings. Withers’ profound and provocative photographic work has been viewed in museums, newspapers, and in magazines across the world. He was an author of several books including a book that documented the tragic murder of 14 year-old Emmett Till, the teenager who was lynched in rural Mississippi in the 1955. Till’s murder fueled outrage across the world and cast the national spotlight on the brutality and horrors of the racism that southern blacks were facing. Withers photographed many noted African Americans including baseball legend Willie Mays; boxer Jackie Robinson; musician and entertainers such as B. B. King, Ray Charles, Elvis Presley, Ike & Tina Turner, Rufus and Carla Thomas and many others. He is also credited with photographing Dr. Martin Luther King during his many visits to Memphis, and especially, on the fateful day that he was killed here on April 4, 1968.

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Beacon of Hope Award

The College will present the prestigious Beacon of Hope sculpture to the Withers Family as a symbol of LeMoyne-Owen College's highest honor. "Mr. Withers left a legacy that will enrich the lives of people young and old, black and white for years to come," said Johnnie B. Watson, President (Interim) of The LeMoyne-Owen College. "On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Chairman Robert Lipscomb, and the entire LeMoyne-Owen College family, we salute the contributions and achievements of this great man and what he was able to achieve during his lifetime."

The Beacon of Hope award will also be presented to Phi Delta Kappa, Beta Eta Chapter, one of 115 national sororities of its kind in the United States. The southeast Regional Chapter was organized in 1954 by a group of active and retired educators who perform various types of to schools and to the community. The Chapter has provided support and assistance at every academic level from preschool, to elementary, high school and the college level. It provides assistance to children whose family members are in prison or jail; to single parents, to immigrants and also provides assistance to senior citizens. The Chapter is a sponsor of the Blair T. Hunt Scholarship Luncheon which helps to provide funding for scholarships to needy students who attend LeMoyne-Owen College. Members serve as mentors, volunteers, tutors, instructors, counselors, librarians and in many other roles throughout academia.

The Beacon of Hope awards will be presented during the United Negro College Fund's *Black Tie Gala* on Thursday evening, August 21, 2008 beginning at 7:00 P.M., at the Memphis Cook Convention Center. The evening's featured entertainment will be jazz greats *Randy Crawford and Joe Sample*. A silent auction at 6:30 p.m. will precede the banquet.

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The Gala is the kick-off event for the Hank Aaron Celebrity Sports Weekend which features a Celebrity Sports Golf Tournament on Friday, a 5K Run/Walk also on Friday, and a Celebrity Sports Breakfast on Saturday morning (see the schedule that follows)

**Hank Aaron Celebrity Sports Weekend
Schedule of Activities**

Friday, August 22, 2008

– Celebrity Golf Tournament
Quail Ridge Golf Course, 4055 Altruria Rd., Bartlett, TN

7:00 a.m. Breakfast/Registration
8:00 a.m. Shotgun Start Morning Scrambler

12:00 noon – Awards Luncheon
Hole in One Sponsor – Southaven Pontiac

Friday, August 22, 2008 (continued)

5th Annual Celebrity Sunset 5K Run/Walk
LeMoyne-Owen College Brownlee Lawn
5:00 p.m. Race Day Registration
6:00 p.m. Aerobic Warm-Up
7:00 p.m. Race begins
7:30 p.m. “Concert on the Lawn”

Saturday, August 23, 2008

Celebrity Sports Breakfast, hosted by Mr. Elliot Perry,
former Phoenix Suns
W.W. Herenton Renaissance Center
9:00 a.m. Breakfast
Meet and interact with Celebrities

For more information, please see the contacts listed above.

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