McDonald’s and the American Black Film Festival Challenge Rising Filmmakers to Show Lovin’ through a National Video Competition

Film Director, Malcolm D. Lee

OAK BROOK, Ill. - McDonald’s USA and the American Black Film Festival are join- ing forces to launch the McDonald’s Lovin’ Video Competition. To complement the new “Lovin’” campaign, up-and-com- ing filmmakers are challenged to create one 90-second film that brings to life McDonald’s philoso- phy that, “A little more lovin’ can change a lot.”

Aspiring filmmakers nation- wide are encouraged to enter their best, original submissions by 11:59 p.m. Eastern March 24, 2015, for their chance to win the grand prize and earn accolades from film industry leaders. Three finalists will be selected to attend the 19th annual American Black Film Festival in New York City, June 11 -14, and have an exclusive opportunity to be mentored by critically-acclaimed film director Malcolm D. Lee (Best Man; Best Man Holiday), who will provide the finalists with invaluable film industry tips and advice. The top three films will premiere at the highly-anticipated festival and will be judged by a panel of indus- try experts. Each submission will be critiqued on creativity, imple- mentation of concept and quality. In the end, only one finalist will take home the grand prize - a film equipment package valued at $2,500 and an opportunity to have their film featured on prominent websites, including McDonald’s 365Black.com and other media entities. More information about the competition can be found at www.365Black.com.

“We are excited to partner with McDonald’s USA on this most unique digital video contest,” said Jeff Friday, American Black Film Festival founder and chief executive officer. “The ABFF is committed to supporting emerging artists and pro- viding trailblazing opportunities for them to gain exposure and visibility in the film and television industry.”

“I’m honored to mentor our next generation of aspiring filmmak- ers through ‘Lovin’ Video Compe- tition,’” said Malcolm D. Lee. “Many have mentored and guided me along my journey to make an impact in film, and it’s important for all of us to do our part to bring the next generation up.”

McDonald’s newest campaign reignites the spirit of “I’m lovin’ it” and will inspire everything the brand does moving forward. By focusing on the lovin’ people show each other every day, the campaign provides an opportunity to celebrate and bring more lovin’ to customers. “McDonald’s is excited to em- bark on this initiative with ABFF and the filmmakers of the future from the communities we serve,” said Kristin Wells, External Com- munications Manager, McDonald’s USA. “We hope that the idea of shar- ing love throughout our communi- ties will motivate and inspire the filmmakers as they work tirelessly to make their dreams a reality.”

The Lovin’ Video Competition and ABFF’s vision to promote di- versity in the film and television in- dustry align with McDonald’s 365Black platform - an initiative that celebrates the pride, heritage and achievements of African- Americans year round.

McDonald’s encourages those who live out lovin’ in their lives each day to follow @365Black on Twit- ter and join the conversation using #365LovinFilm. To learn more about the 365Black initiative, visit www.365Black.com.

To learn more about the Ameri- can Black Film Festival and the Lovin’ Video Competition, visit www.abff.com. Follow @ABFF on Twit- ter and @AmericanBlackFilmFestival on Instagram.

Forensic Scientist Henry Lee Speaks at Eastern

Forensic Scientist Henry Lee AT E.C.S.U.

Willimantic - Pioneering and world-renowned forensic scientist Henry Lee visited Eastern Connecti- cut State University on Feb. 10 to talk about lessons he has learned from investigating high profile cases. Lee’s visit was part of Eastern’s Arts and Lecture Series, and drew a ca- pacity crowd in the Betty R. Tipton Room of the Student Center. With unexpected humor, Lee discussed his childhood, career and philosophy on life.

“The way to make impossible become possible — these words, the under- lying mantra to Lee’s talk, have mo- tivated him to success. ‘The first thing I learned in this country was how to open the door,’ he said. ‘It doesn’t matter what you do, what your profession is — work hard.’

Over the past 50 years, Lee has helped solve more than 15,000 cases and worked with law enforcement agencies from 46 countries. Through his travels, four truths have helped guide him: the power of knowledge, the importance of positive thinking, the value of self-reliance and the ben- efits of teamwork.

Born in 1938 to an affluent fam- ily in China, Lee’s life was suddenly changed when his mother and 13 sib- lings fled to Taiwan after the Chinese Civil War. His father, who was trav- erse on a passenger ship, was on sank. Lee was six years old, and his mother had to raise all 13 children on her own. “I respect and fear my mother more than anyone,” he fondly said. She passed away a few years ago at the age of 106.

Growing up in Taiwan, fatherless, with no motivation to attend univer- sity, Lee went to police school, mostly because it was one of the few opportuni- ties in the area. “I didn’t grow up wanting to be a cop,” but by the age of 25, Lee attained the rank of captain at the Taipei Police Department — the youngest person in Taiwanese history to do so.

As investigation techniques were rudimentary back then, and the field of forensic science not yet devel- oped, Lee said police work was very basic. He quickly realized a lot of innocence were being punished because of this. “Police investigation should be totally objective, transpar- ent and involve the community,” he said.

To pursue new opportunities, Lee and his wife, Margaret, moved to the United States in 1965 with only $15 between them. “When I came to this country, I didn’t speak any English. After 50 years, I still don’t speak English,” Lee said, poking fun at his thick Chinese accent.

After nearly 10 years of study- ing and working odd jobs, includ- ing busing tables in the explora- tion and instructing kung fu on the weekends, Lee earned a bachelor’s degree in forensic science in 1972 and a Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1975. Since then, he has been given 20 honorary doctorate degrees and received special train- ing from the FBI Academy and other organizations.

Lee’s career quickly gathered momentum, and so did his celeb- rity. Over the years, he has re- ceived countless awards and rec- ognitions; written more than 40 books; and been featured in mov- ies, TV shows and talk shows around the world. Lee even has his own TV show, “Trace Evidence: The Case Files of Dr. Henry Lee,” which is shown on the network TruTV.

The amount of attention he has garnered is overwhelming. Now in his late 70s, Lee declines invita- tions to speak on talk shows or attend red carpet events, much pre- ferring the settings of schools and colleges where he can speak with young people. “If old people are over the hill, Young people are the future,” Lee said.

Lee’s testimony featured promi- nently in the trials of O.J. Simpson, Jayson Williams, William Kennedy Smith and the “Wood Chipper” murderer. Lee has assisted in the investigations of other famous crimes, such as the murder of Jon Benet Ramsey; the suicide of White House Counsel Vincent Foster; the kidnaping of Elizabeth Smart; the death of Chandra Levy; the reinvestigation of the Kennedy assassination; and the Casey Anthony case.

Lee made the point that media attention is not all that makes a case “high profile.” “All cases are high profile, even the ones that happen in small towns to regular people and families. They are all just as import- ant.”

The four primary lessons he has learned from these cases and others are: preserve the evidence; do not get emotionally involved; just be- cause someone’s DNA is present does not mean they are guilty; and always keep an open mind, because there are two sides to every story.

Lee also spent some time com- paring the reality of forensic inves- tigation to that of TV shows such as CSI. “In CSI, the case is solved at the end of the episode,” but in real- ity cases may take years to close, while others go unresolved. “In CSI everyone gets a hug and kiss at the end of the episode. I’ve solved many cases, and never got a hug or kiss,” Lee said, drawing laughs from the crowd.

With more words of wisdom, Lee said, “Life is going to have ups and downs. When highs come, remem- ber not to get too cocky, and when valleys come, don’t get too de- pressed.”