

BRAG

The High School of Fashion Industries Students Receive Scholarships from the Black Retail Action Group at 39th Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala. Honoree Earvin ‘Magic’ Johnson Takes Philanthropy to New Heights

November (New York, NY) - The Black Retail Action Group (BRAG) a national 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization, hosted its 39th Annual Scholarship and Awards Dinner Gala last month at Cipriani, Wall Street.

The gala attracted more than 500 fashion industry insiders, retail executives, celebrities and the media, bringing together many partners who made the event a tremendous success. Retailers such as Best Buy, Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy’s Inc, Lord & Taylor, Bloomingdale’s and Footlocker were just some of the event sponsors who provided financial scholarships that evening to high school and college students interested in pursuing careers in fashion, retail and related industries.

This year 24 scholarships were awarded to students from schools such as Fordham Leadership Academy, The Laboratory Institute of Merchandising (LIM), The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), Centenary College, Berkley College and The University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Alexandria Sharpe, Chantel Hylton, Dalaeja Foreman, Samatha Parchment, Yanika Peter, Jamila Gulstone, Jonathan Gardenhire and Kiah Wayman all students The High School of Fashion Industries were also the recipients of scholarships presented at the gala

This annual fundraiser supports such efforts as the industry acclaimed BRAG Summer Internship Program; The Executive Development Series; and the initiation of new BRAG college clubs at colleges and universities across the country. In the past year alone BRAG has opened student chapters at Howard University, The Ohio State University, Centenary College, LIM and Morehouse College.

The theme of the BRAG gala, *The Power of Change*, recognized that the world at large including the retail and fashion industries are on the cusp of a significant transformation. The leadership exemplified by each of the honorees and their methods of effecting change have challenged industry standards to ensure that all people of color are embraced, mentored and given opportunities.

Former NBA all star, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and President and CEO of Magic Johnson Enterprises, Earvin “Magic” Johnson was recognized alongside Richard Dent, Senior Vice President, COO and Co-Leader of Victoria’s Secret, PINK; Shawn Outler, Group Vice President, Multicultural Merchandising and Vendor Development, Macy’s Inc.; Stephen Sadove, President and CEO, Saks Fifth Avenue, Inc.; and Constance White, Style Director and Fashion Spokesperson for eBay. Best Buy, nationally recognized for its diversity initiatives, received the BRAG Corporate Award while Latisha and Colin Daring, Co-owners of the Brooklyn, New York based boutique Pieces, was presented with the group’s JJ Thomas Business Innovators Award. “We were thrilled to have such a stellar group of honorees again this year”, said Gary L. Lampley, BRAG President. “Each of them was selected because they all understand that change equals diversity and diversity equals dollars and sense”.

Mr. Johnson’s philanthropic efforts was certainly the highlight of the evening when he held an impromptu auction raising an additional \$10k to go towards supporting some of the new college clubs and student programs.

To date, BRAG, whose mission is to promote the acceptance and participation of men and women of color at all levels of retail and related industries, has been able to award over 350 scholarships totaling more than \$300,000 to students who have achieved academic success and who exhibit financial need. Remarkably, over 800 students nationwide have participated in the industry acclaimed summer internship program. BRAG also continues to be praised for being one of the few organizations of its kind to recognize the achievements of African American’s and others in retail and retail related industries. For more information, visit www.bragusa.org.