

# BRAG

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## **BRAG Celebrates 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship & Awards Gala Earvin ‘Magic’ Johnson and Best Buy to Receive Special Honors**

**October (New York, NY)** - The Black Retail Action Group Inc. (BRAG) a national 501 (c) (3) , not-for-profit organization will host its 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship and Awards Dinner Gala on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at Cipriani, Wall Street, from 6 to 10pm.

BRAG will celebrate the contributions of former NBA all star, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and President and CEO of Magic Johnson Enterprises, Earvin ‘Magic’ Johnson, who will receive the BRAG Special Recognition Award. Actress Malinda Williams, best known for her role as “Bird” on the long running Showtime series *Soul Food*, will emcee the event which typically draws close to 500 retailers, industry insiders and fashion influencers.

Magic Johnson will be recognized alongside Richard Dent, Senior Vice President, COO and Co-Leader of Victoria’s Secret, PINK; Stephen Sadove, President and CEO, Saks Fifth Avenue, Inc.; Shawn Outler, Group Vice President, Multicultural Merchandising and Vendor Development, Macy’s Inc., and Constance White, Style Director and Fashion Spokesperson for eBay. Best Buy, which is nationally recognized for its diversity initiatives, will receive the BRAG Corporate Award.

The theme of this year’s gala, *The Power of Change*, recognizes 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. “We are thrilled to have such a stellar group of honorees again this year”, says Gary L. Lampley, BRAG President. “Each of them were selected because they all understand that change equals diversity and diversity equals dollars and sense”.

Latisha and Colin Daring, Co-owners of the Brooklyn based boutique Pieces, will be presented with the JJ Thomas Business Innovators Award, named after Mr. JJ Thomas a founding member of BRAG and role model to many in the retail industry. He served as the group’s President for nearly two decades.

Every year this event brings together many partners who make it a success. Companies such as Best Buy, Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy’s Inc, Lord& Taylor, Bloomingdale’s, and Footlocker are just some of the participating companies who provide financial scholarships that evening to deserving high school and college students. This annual fundraiser supports such efforts as the industry acclaimed BRAG summer internship program; the BRAG Executive Development Series; and the initiation of new BRAG student clubs at colleges and universities nationwide. In the last two years BRAG has opened college chapters at schools such as Ohio State University, Howard University, the Laboratory Institute of Merchandising and Morehouse College.

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](http://www.bragusa.org). Media inquiries contact Gillard Jones Agency at 212-726-1163 or via email at [gillardjonesagency@yahoo.com](mailto:gillardjonesagency@yahoo.com)

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