

Hip Hop Goes to the University of Wisconsin-Madison

MC Lyte, Russell Simmons, Salt, Dr. Damon Williams and Global Grind Announce the Search for the 1st MC Lyte/First Wave \$100,000 Scholarship Award Recipient

New York, NY - [August 30, 2012](#) - Hip Hop Sisters Foundation (HHSF) CEO/Founder MC Lyte, Advisory Board Members Russell Simmons and Salt, University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Damon A. Williams, and HHSF President Lynn Richardson are pleased to announce a new \$100,000 hip-hop scholarship partnership that will enable one college-bound student to pursue a bachelor's degree from one of the world's top academic institutions - the University of Wisconsin-Madison. **A press conference and reception will take place at the office of Rush Communications on Thursday September 6th 2012 to announce the scholarship.** The recipient will hold one of the competitive First Wave Scholar slots in the only higher education program of its kind to incorporate hip-hop artistry at the college level. **Freshman who plan to enroll in college in the Fall of 2013 are invited to apply for the MC Lyte / UW Madison \$100,000 First Wave Scholarship Presented by Hip Hop Sisters Foundation at www.hiphopsisters.org.** The application deadline is **October 1, 2012** and the winner will be announced by MC Lyte and HHSF in collaboration with this year's Soul Train Music Awards.

"For years I've dreamed of having the ability to help our community and now finally the day has arrived," said MC Lyte. "HHSF is about changing lives and truly encouraging several generations that have been and are influenced by hip-hop culture. It is my life's mission to see those who believe, actually see their dreams come to fruition. Helping the younger generation see their strengths and potential is what my goals are for this foundation. This scholarship partnership with UW-Madison is just the beginning for what HHSF has in store."

A full-tuition First Wave scholarship has been named for the legendary pioneer for women in hip-hop, MC Lyte. This partnership will enhance the recruitment of the seventh cohort of the First Wave Learning Community, which launched in 2007 and currently has 65 scholars pursuing degrees in topics from theater & drama to science. **For UW-Madison's First Wave, "the partnership is another step toward strengthening the educational, social justice and empowerment aspects embodied by hip-hop," said Willie Ney,** Founder and Executive Director of the Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives (OMAI) and First Wave. "Over time," Williams added, "we know that this relationship will allow us to accelerate our efforts to educate the world's next generation of innovators, artists and community builders who will lead the next generation of game-changing UW-Madison alumni."

Russell Simmons, Global Grind founder, HHSF advisory board member and co-founder of the Hip Hop Summit Action Network praised the Hip Hop Sisters Foundation for its strong legacy of being a national voice that reverberates with the truest heartbeat and pulse of the global hip-hop community. **"This partnership signals an opportunity to help young people influenced by hip hop culture think of education as an achievable goal rather than a phantom wish reserved only for the lucky," said Simmons.**

"The UW-Madison MC Lyte partnership presents us with an amazing opportunity to align ourselves with one of the nation's hip-hop pioneers and a continuing presence in the lives of young people through her work with the Hip Hop Sisters Network," Williams said. "This relationship will not only strengthen the academic possibilities of the network, but allow UW-Madison to create a deeper connection with the hip-hop generation."

"MC Lyte's focus on academic excellence, artistic integrity and community involvement mirror the three "A's" of First Wave which are academics, arts and activism," Ney said. "Combining the top young artists in the nation in the world's first and only full-tuition scholarship program for spoken word and hip-hop artists with a global icon like MC Lyte and the Hip Hop Sisters Network brand is a natural evolution for our

revolutionary program. We foresee great things developing from this relationship, developing from this relationship, including professional development opportunities for our students, greater visibility for our program and the establishment of a broader and deeper pool of talent for our scholarship initiatives."

The UW-Madison First Wave/MC Lyte scholarship announcement builds on the empowerment work of the Hip Hop Sisters Foundation, which has already launched a national relationship with Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. to decrease the negative effects of teen pregnancy, and is planning the first ever Hip Hop Sisters Expressions of Life Summer Education Institute for Girls, where celebrity advisory board members and educational, health, and financial experts will empower over 250 young women as they enter young adulthood.

About Hip-Hop Sisters Network

Founded by MC Lyte, the legendary lyricist and iconic hip-hop pioneer, Hip Hop Sisters Network includes Hip Hop Sisters Artistry, which provides a platform for female artists to showcase their talents in an environment of encouragement and respect, as well as Hip Hop Sisters Foundation, which is a non-profit charity that promotes positive images of women of ethnic diversity by bringing together leaders from the world of Hip Hop, the entertainment industry, and the corporate world. HHS provides national and international support to women and youth around the globe on the topics of: Cultural Issues; Financial Empowerment; Health and Wellness; Mentorship; and Educational Opportunities. Advisory board members include Faith Evans, Ledisi, Jada Pinkett Smith, Chilli, Russell Simmons, Cheryl "Salt" James, Malinda Williams, Kelly Price, Malcolm Jamal Warner, and Dr. Benjamin Chavis. Join the Movement: www.hiphopsisters.org

About First Wave:

The First Wave Spoken Word and Hip Hop Arts Learning Community is a unit within the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement. It is a cutting-edge multicultural artistic program for incoming students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Bringing together young artists and leaders from across the United States and beyond, the First Wave Learning Community offers students the opportunity to live, study and create together in a close-knit, dynamic campus community. Operating under the Office of the Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer and administered by the Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives (OMAI), the First Wave Learning Community is the first university program in the nation centered on spoken word and hip-hop culture. The inaugural First Wave cohort of 15 students began their UW-Madison career in the Fall 2007 Semester and currently there are 65 spoken word and hip-hop artists on full-tuition scholarship in the First Wave Program. We are currently looking for the next group of motivated students to join the First Wave Learning Community's 7th Cohort in 2013.

About GlobalGrind:

GlobalGrind is the eyes, ears and voice for [today's](#) diverse, multi-cultural audience. Founded by Russell Simmons, GlobalGrind provides a voice to [today's](#) next generation. Reaching over 4 million UMGs, their coverage transcends all judgments and as such has become a "safe haven" for [today's](#) newsmakers, whether it be celebrities or ordinary individuals thrust into the spotlight. GlobalGrind focuses on the latest pop culture, politics, music, entertainment and lifestyle news. As the American mindset continues to evolve, GlobalGrind gives readers the timely news updates from a unique angle featuring: compelling interviews, exclusive breaking news, celebrity contributors and cultural commentary. Follow GlobalGrind on Twitter [@GlobalGrind](#)

ABOUT DAMON A. WILLIAMS, PhD

Damon A. Williams is the Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer and a member of the faculty in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In this role, Dr. Williams provides leadership on issues of access, equity, inclusion, and diversity.

He heads a division with more than 100 employees and several of the nation's most innovative leadership development, inclusion, research, and college preparation programs, including the Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives (OMAI/First Wave), the Precollege Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning

Excellence (PEOPLE), the Wisconsin Equity and Inclusion (Wei) Laboratory, and the largest Posse Foundation partnership in the nation.

Dr. Williams is considered to be among the nation's most dynamic and innovative leaders around issues of diversity, organizational change, and creating powerful educational platforms for the hip-hop generation. He has worked with or lectured for more than 200 organizations across the world and will publish two new books in January of 2013 - "Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education" and "The Chief Diversity Officer: Strategy, Structure, and Change Management" with Stylus Publishing Press.

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