



Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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JIM ELLIS - INSPIRATION OF MOVIE PRIDE VISITS ROCKFORD DURING MAYOR'S 2ND ANNUAL YOUTH SUMMIT

WHAT: Mayor Larry Morrissey and the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) are hosting the **2nd Annual Mayor's Youth Summit**.

The Keynote speaker for this year's event will be Jim Ellis, a swim coach whose successful efforts to build an inner city swimming program and to revitalize a community is chronicled in the newly released film "PRIDE". Ellis will speak to the attending teens about "Instilling Success, One Lap at a Time".

WHEN: Saturday April 21, 2007 from 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

WHERE: University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford.

INTERVIEWS: Jim Ellis, Mayor Larry Morrissey, Adam Smith, MYAC students

PHOTO OP: Jim Ellis, Mayor Larry Morrissey, Adam Smith, MYAC students

PARTNERS: City of Rockford Human Services, United Way of Rock River Valley, University of Illinois College of Medicine.

ABOUT JIM'S SPEECH: "Instilling Pride — One Lap at a Time"

Ellis discusses how he established the P.D.R. (Philadelphia Department of Recreation) swim team in the 1970's and how he was able to positively affect the lives of inner-city kids in Philadelphia. He shows audiences that anyone can overcome adversity and negativity if they have positive role models. Ellis shows listeners that through dedication to others, it is possible to positively change lives and create a better future.

ABOUT JIM ELLIS: Jim Ellis' story is testimony to the power of dreams and their ability to inspire and transform human life. His story is the subject of the film, *Pride*, starring Terrence Howard.

Ellis founded the P.D.R. Swim Team, based at the Marcus Foster Recreation Center in the Nicetown section of Philadelphia in 1971. Today, it is the City's nationally recognized competitive swim team, the nation's best predominately African-American team, and has become a model for urban swim programs around the country.

Over the past 36 years, Ellis has been introducing competitive swimming to inner city youth and their families. His coaching has provided a healthy and stimulating environment in which the young athletes can grow and compete. It also brings together families from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Through travel to various competitions, the program exposes swimmers to other parts of the country as well as to different lifestyles.

The soon to be released movie based on Jim Ellis, *Pride*, tells the story of how Ellis built a successful swimming program in one of Philly's most impoverished neighborhoods. It is set in the early 1970s, when the lives of the young African-American teens on the P.D.R. swim team are full of hardship and prejudice. The film shows this uplifting and soulful story of Ellis' journey that pulled together a group of troubled inner-city kids, made them into a dedicated team, and taught them how to overcome adversity through hard work and determination. Jim Ellis teaches his swimmers more than just how to compete in the water; he gives them important and life-changing lessons that prepare them for a better future. Through this emotional journey, Coach Ellis also discovers his team has a lot to teach him as well. *Pride* stars Oscar nominee Terrence Howard (*Hustle and Flow*, *Crash*, *Ray*), popular comedian turned actor Bernie Mac (*The Bernie Mac Show*, *Kings of Comedy*, *Ocean's Eleven*), and Kimberly Elise (star of CBS series *Close to Home*).

As a real-life role model, Ellis' story strikes a chord with all types of audiences. Coach Ellis is a loveable storyteller whose inspiring true-to-life story captivates and motivates audiences to always remember the influential power of one. (Source: Keppler Speakers)

ABOUT MYAC: The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council ("MYAC") is a working council of young people dedicated to being a voice for those ages 14-19 within the Rockford community. They focus on youth issues related to City planning, initiatives, special events, and more. MYAC is the driving force behind nFACTOR, a Citywide marketing campaign that targets youth focusing on issues associated with educational aspiration, leadership, community service and positive decision-making.

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