

KICKIN' IT

9th annual

Ebony Magazine celebrates crème de la crème of outstanding women at awards luncheon

By Audrey J. Bernard
Lifestyles/Society Editor

Linda Johnson Rice, president & CEO, Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., addressed a plethora of smartly dressed African American businesswomen at the 9th annual *Ebony* Outstanding Women in Marketing & Communications luncheon on Thursday, May 1 at the fashionable Cipriani restaurant on East 42nd Street in the busy Grand Central area. This was the second year in a row that this event was held at the ultimate watering hole for the rich and famous. Also returning as Mistress of Ceremonies was Harriette Cole, creative director, *Ebony Magazine*.

After checking in, some 500 guests were greeted by a stunning wall of flowers in assorted reds and deep pink with a touch of burgundy set in large red glass vases with deep purple Calla Lilies at the bases. Adding to the dramatic display were

votive lights causing a sensational luminosity over the enormous room just behind the Blooming Dogwood branches which was transformed into a cozy setting for the ladies who lunch. Decorator to the stars Margo T. Lewis of Spin 7 Event Design and master florist Jack Williams styled the breathtakingly beautiful venue.

The designing duo added more radiance to the ambience with the addition of pink swag bags containing Luster's Pink hair care products. The special occasion called for a special drink and Ebonytinis — made from Alizé Rose, a new taste of romance made with premium French vodka and strawberry — had the ladies feeling pink all over!

Johnson told her impressive audience how pleased she was to honor another crop of luminaries who have "reached astounding heights and raised the bar of excellence and paved the way for others. *Ebony Magazine* is proud to acknowledge the phe-

nominal contributions of African American businesswomen during this special annual event."

This year's harvest of trailblazers has reaped success of immeasurable heights in their fields of endeavor and serves as shining examples for others to follow. Johnson presented the coveted *Madam C.J. Walker award* to **Melody Hobson**, president, Ariel Mutual Funds, and financial contributor to Good Morning America.

Other award recipients included: *public relations awards* were presented to **Marvet Britto**, founder & CEO, The Britto Agency, by Elder **Karen Bernard**, co-founder, Christian Cultural Center; and to **Patti S. Webster**, CEO, W&W Public Relations, Inc., presented in song and praise by her personal girlfriend and client **Patti LaBelle**.

Advertising agency awards were presented by **Kenard E. Gibbs**, group publisher, *Ebony* and *Jet* Magazines and presi-

dent, *Ebony/Jet Entertainment Group, LLC*, to **McGhee Williams Osse**, co-CEO, Burrell Communications; and **Zeline Kelly-Bates**, media director, Beaman, Incorporated.

Corporate leadership awards were presented by **Lisa E. Davis**, partner, Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Slez, to **Carla Harris**, managing director, Morgan Stanley; **Susan A. Banks**, executive vice president, marketing & creative services, TV One; and **Nadja Fidelia**, managing director, Lehman Brothers.

Michael Eric Dyson, renowned author and university professor of sociology, Georgetown University, and an ardent Senator **Barack Obama** supporter knocked the ladies who lunch off their pedicure feet like a fabulous shoe sale at Saks Fifth Avenue with his electrifying take on the Democratic presidential race.

Ironically, **Michelle Obama**, vice president, Community and external affairs, University of

Chicago Hospital, and wife of presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama, was honored last year. Dyson presented *journalism awards* to **Robin Givhan**, fashion editor, Washington Post; and **Lyne Pitts**, vice president, strategic initiatives, NBC News.

Founded in 2000, the *Ebony* Outstanding Women in Marketing & Communications luncheon was created to salute leading African American women in the ever-changing fields of marketing and communications. Johnson Publishing wishes to thank their generous corporate sponsors including TV One (title sponsor), Luster Products, Alizé, Ariel Mutual Funds and CoverGirl Queen Collection.

And special mention to **Marva Hicks** who received a standing ovation after her soulful rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Elder **Karen Bernard** delivered a spiritual message before a delectable Filet of Soul lunch topped off with the famous Cipriani chocolate cake.



Rashid Silvera, Malaak Compton Rock, Michael Eric Dyson, Hoda Kotb



Honoree Marvet Britto with mom Linda Salvado



Gail Marquis, Audrey Smaltz, Ebony JoAnn, Terry Williams



Kelly Hill, honoree Marvet Britto



Honoree Carla Harris, Lisa Davis



Susan Fales-Hill, Harriette Cole



Linda Johnson Rice, Holly Robinson Peete



Burrell co-CEO's honoree McGhee Williams Osse & Fay Ferguson



Tamara Tunie, Greg Generet, Clara Villarosa



Sade Baderinwa, Rev. Dr. A.R. Bernard, Sylvia Rhone, Rev. Michael Eric Dyson



Marita Monroe, Patti LaBelle

(Photos: Audrey J. Bernard, Gerard Gaskin, Margot Jordan)