

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrity Recording Artist Leela James to Serve as Grand Marshal of 40th Annual “Original” MLK Parade on January 15th, 2018

HOUSTON (Jan. 8th, 2018) – The legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lives on in Houston! On **Monday, January 15th, 2018**, the Houston Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade Foundation, Inc. and Black Heritage Society, home to the nation’s first-ever MLK, Jr. birthday parade celebration, will ring in the new year and historical milestone at the **40th Annual “Original” MLK, Jr. Birthday Parade** in Downtown Houston at corner of *Texas & Crawford*, located in front of *Minute Maid Park*. Award winning singer and songwriter **Leela James** will serve as the grand marshal for this year’s celebration. The parade will begin promptly at 10:00 AM. The parade and weekend of holiday of activities are officially licensed by the King Center (“IPM”) Intellectual Property Management of Atlanta, GA.

The extravagant and diversified celebration will feature an array of marching bands, decorated floats, dance teams, military & ROTC groups, first responders, city & county officials, VIP guest appearances, and notable organizations from around the world. The parade will be immediately followed by the **2nd Annual MLK, Jr. Taste of Houston** festival in LOT B of **Minute Maid Park** (at the corner of *Texas & St. Emmanuel*). The family-friendly festival will feature popular and cultural food cuisines and desserts, artwork, kid-friendly activities, and live musical performances. Attendance to the parade and the festival is free to the general public.

This year’s parade celebration is part of a full weekend of festivities and community service projects with a focus on celebrating the life and legacy of beloved civil rights leader, the late **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** The schedule of activities will kick off on **Thursday, January 11th** and continue through the weekend, including the annual MLK children’s march and MLK volunteer day of service (in partnership with the national chapter of the **AFL-CIO**) at **MacGregor Park** on **Saturday, January 13th**, beginning at 10:00 AM.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade Foundation and Black Heritage Society proudly recognizes our official sponsors for this year, including **CITGO Petroleum, United Airlines, AFL-CIO, Communications Workers of America, Houston Astros Foundation, Texas Lunar Festival, Timmy Chans, KBXX 97.9 The Box & KMJQ Majic 102.1 (Urban One), Houston First, The McNair Foundation** and **Harris County Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO)**. Entry for this year’s parade, including parade entry, volunteering, festival vending and sponsorship is now available. For more information, please call **(713) 236-1700** or visit the official website at www.blackheritagesociety.org.

About Black Heritage Society

The **Black Heritage Society** is a self-help, non-profit organization chartered by the State of Texas. We inspire, teach and honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the weekend of the federal holiday occurring on the third Monday of each January with a celebratory parade and several community activities throughout the weekend. Black Heritage Society has a long history of fighting for equal rights, social justice and accommodations for all.