SAINT PAUL & MINNESOTA FOUNDATION HONORS ANTI-RACISM ACTIVISTS WITH 16TH ANNUAL FACING RACE AWARDS

A program celebrating the honorees will be broadcast on the Minnesota channel of TPT Twin Cities PBS, October 23, 7 p.m., and will feature a performance by Ensō Daiko of TaikoArts Midwest

St. Paul, Minn. – Oct. 4, 2022 – The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation (the Foundation) today announced the recipients of its 2022 Facing Race Awards. They are Classie Dudley, president of the Duluth NAACP and executive director of Community Action Duluth; Angela Hooks, founder and executive director of Black on Black Development and Entertainment, Inc.; Txongpao Lee, executive director of the Hmong Cultural Center; and Lulete Mola, co-founder and president of the MN Black Collective Foundation.

Now in their 16th year, the award honors individuals and organizations working to eliminate racism and its effects in Minnesota. Honorees are nominated by the community and receive grants to benefit Minnesota nonprofits of their choice.

“The work to eliminate racial discrimination is hard; as a community we must acknowledge and support those who have made standing up against racism a major focus of their life’s work,” said Eric J. Jolly, Ph.D., Foundation president and chief executive officer. “This year’s Facing Race honorees are doing just that. Through grassroots activism and organizational leadership, they are exemplary in pushing for justice and equity in order to make positive change in Minnesota. We are honored to celebrate their tireless contributions.”

This year’s Facing Race honorees will be celebrated during a 30-minute program at 7 p.m., Sunday, October 23, on the Minnesota Channel of TPT Twin Cities PBS. The program will be hosted by the Foundation’s Chief Operating Officer Nadege Souvenir. She will be joined by Dr. Jolly and the honorees, who will share stories of their community activism and anti-racism work. The broadcast will also feature a performance by Ensō Daiko from TaikoArts Midwest, an organization promoting taiko drum performance as a way to strengthen and build community while recognizing the full diversity and depth of Asian arts and artists in Minnesota and the Midwest.

Established in 2007, the Foundation’s Facing Race Awards honor Minnesota’s anti-racism activists who work tirelessly to change the narrative on race and create communities where everyone feels safe, valued and respected.

About the 2022 Facing Race Honorees

**Classie Dudley** is president of the Duluth NAACP and executive director of Community Action Duluth. In both roles, Dudley works to eliminate systemic racism and gender disparities in the community. Under her leadership, the city of Duluth now commits $600,000 annually to implement a nonpunitive crisis response team that is separate from the Police Department. With her team, Dudley has established the first NAACP-hosted Minnesota Afro-Academic Cultural Technology Scientific Olympics in Minnesota for area BIPOC students, eliminated privatized healthcare in four Duluth-area jails, and is implementing the Stop the Stops campaign to end racial bias policing by pretextual stops. Dudley is also collaborating with the area’s top employers and Duluth Chamber of Commerce to recruit and retain BIPOC professionals.
Angela Hooks is a community activist, founder and executive director of Black on Black Development and Entertainment, Inc., a St. Paul-based nonprofit working to empower Black people and rebuild the Twin Cities’ Black community by removing racial disparities in institutions, corporations and the justice system.

Hooks provides business consulting and services to Black business owners, in addition to helping the underserved interpret medical and other social service applications. Her next venture will create the Cultural Arts Café and Supper Club in St. Paul where Black chefs and cooks, entertainers, artists and the formerly incarcerated will showcase their talents while gaining a consistent revenue stream, in addition to receiving hospitality and maintenance training.

Txongpao Lee has been the executive director of the Hmong Cultural Center for 20 years. In that time, he has led the Hmong 101 program to teach the culture, history and contributions Hmong Americans make to U.S. culture. Lee also serves as a cultural resource for social workers, teachers, lawyers, criminal justice officials and health care professionals who are working with Hmong clients. An advocate and teacher for immigrant and refugee clients, Lee helps them earn their U.S. Citizenship. In 2021, the Cultural Center’s storefront museum was vandalized with racist White Supremacist graffiti, an incident receiving broad media coverage. As a result of Lee’s courageous leadership, the Twin Cities community responded with more than $30,000 in museum support.

Lulete Mola is co-founder and president of the MN Black Collective Foundation, Minnesota’s first Black community foundation advancing the genius of Black-led change. She leads the Collective as it is building infrastructure, practicing creative and innovative resource disbursement, growing assets, and expanding Black philanthropic power to advance a new model of philanthropy. Previously, Mola served as Chief Strategy Officer at the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota (WFMN), focused on the advancement of women, girls, and gender-expansive people at the intersection of gender and racial justice. At WFMN, Mola led the Young Women’s Initiative of Minnesota, a $10 million visionary public-private partnership to achieve equity in opportunities and improve the lives of Black, Indigenous, and young women of color.

Editor’s note: Find a Facing Race program description, honoree photos and a teaser of TPT’s Facing Race program:
https://www.spmcf.org/who-we-are/newsroom/media-center/press-kit-facing-race-awards

About the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation believes in the best of Minnesota and the power of its communities. With roots in Saint Paul and partners across the state, it is Minnesota’s largest community foundation and the partner of choice for thousands of donors, nonprofits and community organizations. The Foundation aspires to create an equitable, just and vibrant Minnesota where all communities and people thrive by inspiring generosity, advocating for equity, and investing in community-led solutions. Visit: spmcf.org

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