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ANTHONY ANDERSON, CHRIS SPENCER TO HOST CHARITY EVENT FOCUSED ON GOLF DIVERSITY DURING U.S. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP WEEK

Tee Up Diversity will celebrate the historical achievements of minorities in golf, raise money for programs for underserved communities to diversify the game of golf.

BOSTON – April 27, 2022 –The Reaching Back Foundation today announced its plans for an inaugural event during the week of the 122nd U. S. Open Championship that will celebrate the significant, historical achievements of minorities in the game of golf, while raising funds for programs that work to diversify the business and game of golf. **Tee Up Diversity** will be held on **Thursday, June 16** at The Newbury Boston and will end with an after party at Contessa. Seven-time NAACP Image Awards Winner, **Anthony Anderson**, and award-winning producer, **Chris Spencer** serve as host. **Damon Hack** from NBC Sports will provide commentary and interview special guests from the sports desk during the event.

Tee Up Diversity is the signature event of The Reaching Back Foundation organized with support from The Country Club and the USGA. The event is raising funds to help organizations dedicated to addressing educational and professional development inequities still evident today with an emphasis on programs relating to the business and game of golf.

There are more than 2 million jobs across the \$84 billion golf industry, yet only a small fraction of these jobs are held by those among underrepresented communities.

“The game of golf has a chance to be better, by identifying and embracing more people with different perspectives and different experiences, and exposure is a critical part of the solution,” said **E. Macey Russell**, The Country Club’s U.S. Open DEI Committee Chair. “Tee Up Diversity was created with Lee Elders’ vision of exposing the game to those who would be without it, who would never be aware of the opportunities and possibilities the game can provide.”

Proceeds from the event will:

- Establish and endow the Lee Elder Scholarship Fund, which will be administered through the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund. The Scholarship will benefit minority college students from Massachusetts who work in the game of golf.
- Provide scholarship aid to young people of color who play golf at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and those who are interested in pursuing careers in the business of golf. These dedicated funds will be administered by the United Negro College Fund.
- Support local programs that are expanding access to the game for inner city youth. Beneficiaries will include the Urban Golf Club and other grass roots organizations supporting the game of golf.

The event will feature a history-filled program highlighting African Americans' role in the game of golf and honor golf African American UGA legend, **Renee Powell**, golf trailblazers **Jim Dent** and **Jim Thorpe**, and golf course management trailblazer, **Edwin Lamour** for their achievements in the business and game of golf.

This special event will recognize:

- The history of the United Golfers Association (UGA, also known as the Chitlin' Circuit and the Negro Golf Tour) and the champions who played on this tour, including Lee Elder, Bill Spiller, Ted Rhodes, Howard Wheeler, Ann Gregory, Charlie Sifford, Pete Brown, and Thelma Cowans, while also recognizing their important contributions to the Civil Rights Movement.
- The Lee Elder Internship, which will take place during U.S. Open Championship week, was established by The Country Club with support from the USGA and has a mission of introducing golf's career opportunities to underrepresented student interns from around the world.

"Diversity remains one of the major opportunities for the golf industry, one that can only be addressed with continued initiatives to broaden the audience, reach underrepresented individuals, and support their engagement with the sport," said **Will Fulton**, General Chair for the 2022 U.S. Open. "Tee Up Diversity will be a fun and important way to celebrate both what has been achieved, and all that can be done in the future."

Tickets start at \$5000 with an opportunity to access 5-day passes to the U.S. Open Championship at higher levels. Visit www.TeeUpDiversity.org for details. For more information about the event, contact the Event Producer, AJ Williams at AJ Events (617) 510-8004 / aj@ajwevents.com.

About The Reaching Back Foundation

The Reaching Back Foundation, Inc. (TRBF), founded by a group of minority professionals in 1997, is a Massachusetts Non-Profit 501(c)(3) that raises funds to provide grants to organizations promoting the educational and professional development of minority students and youth in urban neighborhoods. The mission of TRBF is to promote diversity in golf by exposing disadvantaged students to the game and to the idea of pursuing their college education as student athletes and future business leaders. TRBF also aims to "plug the pipeline" of talented students who are forced to drop out of college because of financial hardship by providing funds that reduce their dependence on loans to remain in school.

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