

Vivica A. Fox sings Happy Birthday to her film son, Jonathan McDaniel, at the Spirit of Democracy Awards



Participants pause for a photo with rapper, actor and technology advocate, Jonathan "Lil J" McDaniel, who received the Black Youth Vote Leadership Award during the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation's 15 annual Spirit of Democracy Awards Gala. Pictured (L-R): Vivica A. Fox, actress and producer; Illai Kenney, NCBCP Black Youth Vote; Demetria McKinney, singer and actress; and McDaniel.

Washington, DC – It was a moment to behold when sultry host Vivica A. Fox did a surprise serenade of “Happy Birthday” for former “That’s So Raven” star Jonathan McDaniel upon his receipt of the Black Youth Vote Civic Leadership Award during

The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation's (The National Coalition) 15th annual Spirit of Democracy Awards Gala in Washington, DC last week. Tyler Perry's "House of Payne's" Demetria McKinney brought additional flavor to the affair performing her newest song "Take Away" and then captivating the audience with her special rendition of Whitney Houston's, "You Give Good Love."



Actress and producer, Vivica A. Fox, surprises rapper, actor and technology advocate, Jonathan "Lil J" McDaniel, with a serenade of "Happy Birthday," during the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation's 15th annual Spirit of Democracy Awards Gala where McDaniel received the Black Youth Vote Leadership Award. NCBCP chair, Richard Womack, Sr. looks on.

Accepting his award McDaniel spoke about overcoming major challenges including homelessness to achieve his dream. "The only thing I wanted to do was become a positive role model for my generation. I wanted to do God's work." The actor, rapper

and technology advocate continued, "Being here tonight in front of everyone here lets me know my dreams have come true. I am becoming the role model I want to be." McDaniel co-stars as Fox's son in the upcoming Robert Townsend produced film, "In the Hive."

The event brought together nearly 300 civic, labor, political and spiritual leaders to "Celebrate Our Brothers," as six phenomenal men doing constructive work to empower the African American community were honored. There was also a special Servant Leadership and Community Service Award established in memory of the former manager of the annual Spirit Awards, Ruby Campbell Pulliam.

"It was important to take a moment to lift up and celebrate what the brothers are doing in our communities across the country," said president and CEO of The National Coalition, Melanie L. Campbell. "The men who dedicate their lives to mentoring, social justice, training and creating opportunities for our youth – especially those running black male initiatives – are truly the fabric of our community."

In addition to McDaniel, the 2012 Spirit of Democracy Award recipients are:

David Honig, founder and president Alliances, Minority Media & Telecommunications Council received the Technology and Economic Empowerment Award. Joshua DuBois, executive director, The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships received the Public Service and Community Empowerment Award. Gerald Hudson, executive vice president, Service Employees International Union, received the Community Empowerment and Labor Leadership Award. Al Dotson, chairman of the board, 100 Black Men of America, Inc, received the Community Empowerment and Mentoring Organization of the Year Award. Shawn Dove, campaign manager for Open Society Foundations Campaign for Black Male Achievement received the Visionary Leadership and Community Empowerment Award, The

People's Community Baptist Church Men's Choir also performed. The event was broadcast live on the Internet and can be viewed at: www.ncbcp.org.

"We rolled out the red carpet for the stars of our community," said Richard G. Womack, Sr, chairman of the Board of Directors of The National Coalition. "We had good food, stellar performances by the choir and Demetria McKinney, Vivica Fox was a gracious host, and the room was packed wall-to-wall with role models for the many young people in attendance. It was a wonderful celebration of the brothers and their work.

The Spirit of Democracy Awards are presented to individuals and organizations who have demonstrated a consistent commitment to creating balance in the democratic process and support The National Coalition's mission and vision of making civic participation a cultural responsibility and tradition. Sponsors include AT&T, Verizon, AMGEN, AFL-CIO, SEIU, Knight Foundation, and Dewey Square Group, among others. For more information on The National Coalition visit www.ncbcp.org.