Ashley Allison's Watering Hole Media Acquires The Root



Ashley Allison, a nationally recognized political strategist, communications expert, CNN commentator, and former Obama-Biden White House Administration official, announced today that her company, <u>Watering Hole Media</u>, has acquired digital media outlet, The Root. The acquisition signals a transformative moment in media leadership, one rooted in cultural authority, trust, and representation.

Allison, who also served as the National Coalitions Director for the Biden-Harris 2020 presidential campaign, has built a career on amplifying diverse voices and navigating the intersection of politics, policy, and culture. Through Watering Hole Media, she brings this experience to the digital landscape, positioning the company to deliver journalism, storytelling, and entertainment that reflect the depth and

complexity of Black communities.

"This isn't about making more content but rather about making meaning of this moment," shares Allison. "The Root has always been about preserving culture and creating clarity in a world full of distractions. Owning the power to tell our own stories is a rich tradition The Root is committed to upholding."

Founded in 2008 by historian, filmmaker, and literary critic Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr., Director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, and former Washington Post Publisher Donald E. Graham, The Root is a trusted destination where Black voices are featured and celebrated. "I am so very proud of Ashley Allison for leading The Root into its next exciting chapter, and for returning The Root to its roots," enthused Professor Gates. "When Donald and I launched The Root, my vision was to create a platform to showcase the full complexity of Black life with depth, intelligence, and, most importantly, unapologetic honesty. Too often, legacy mainstream outlets treat Black stories as an afterthought, treating an entire community of people as if they are a sidebar. The Root needed to be a front page in its own right. A platform where our history, our culture, and our politics were not only centered, but elevated."

The Root acquisition will continue the cultural storytelling, while adding immersive multimedia and experimental formats that push boundaries, while honoring the written word and journalistic rigor.

Rashad Robinson, who will serve as a strategic advisor to Watering Hole Media and The Root's team, adds, "Rebooting The Root is an exciting moment in the media landscape, with so much potential to make Black voices an even stronger force in the big fights taking place in our country right now. The Root provides an infrastructure for growing Black talent and supports a drumbeat of reporting on issues that would not

otherwise gain momentum. I'm excited to be part of its next chapter."

Allison's leadership reflects her long-standing commitment to racial equity and representation. Beyond her experience at the White House and on the campaign trail, she is a frequent CNN commentator known for her clear and informed political analysis. Earlier in her career, she served as a high school special education teacher in Brooklyn, New York, before earning her master's in education and a law degree in public interest law. She was also appointed as a Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics Fellow in 2021.

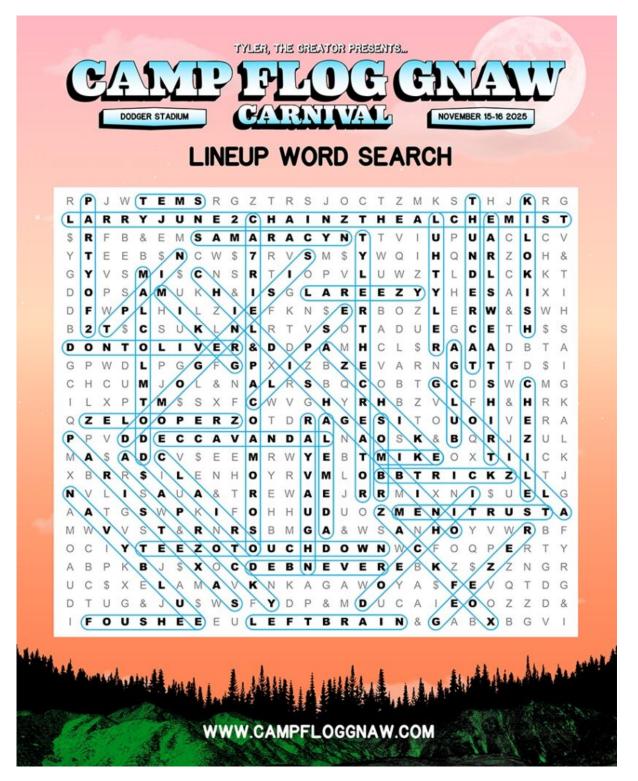
For more information, visit and follow:

The Root: TheRoot.com

Watering Hole Media: <u>Wateringholemedia.com</u> <u>@Wateringholemedia</u>

Ashley Allison: Ashley Allison

Doechii, Clipse & GloRilla On Camp Flog Gnaw Roster & GOLF WANG Opens Australian Store



The lineup for the 2025 Camp Flog Gnaw Carnival has been announced. Doechii, GloRilla, Clipse, and A\$AP Rocky are some of the artists on the roster for the event. Tyler, The Creator's music festival is in its eleventh year and will take place November 15th and 16th on Dodger Stadium grounds. Goldenvoice is producing the outing again this year with Tyler, who will perform as well. The full lineup is available on the official website. Tickets are sold out but there is the

option to join the waitlist. Tyler is currently on the Australian leg of his CHROMAKOPIA tour and his GOLF WANG brand is opening up a new location today in Sydney. It is the fourth location for the brand and shoppers will have the chance to purchase never-before-seen items and exclusives. The GOLF WANG Sydney store hours will be Monday through Saturday: 11am — 7pm and Sunday: 12pm — 6pm.

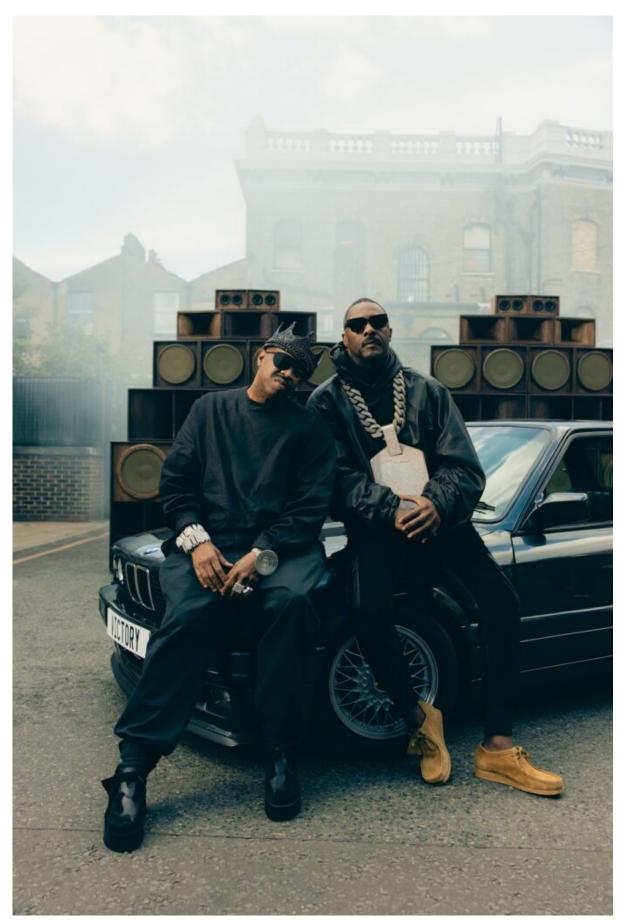








Slick Rick's Victory Will Screen At HollyShorts Film Festival



Credit: Alex J. Piper

Slick Rick's visual album $\it Victory$ will screen at the HollyShorts Film Festival at the TCL Chinese Theater in

Hollywood on Thursday, August 7, 2025. The film is the companion to the audio album that has a scenario for each song. Slick Rick recorded the album with inspiration from his life of ups and downs as a Golden Era hip-hop icon and his love for hip-hop. Idris Elba partnered with Rick to release the project on his 7Wallace label with the Mass Appeal imprint and he is the executive producer. Victory had its first screening on Christmas Day in 2024 at Rikers Island and was hosted by Rick and his wife and business partner Mandy Aragones through their Victory Patch Foundation. Meji Alabi, who directed Beyoncé's Black is King, also directed Victory, and Rick summed it up: "VICTORY is named with purpose. This is more than a body of work — it's where sound meets vision, where resilience meets rhythm. A global love letter to hiphop, to creativity, and to the overlooked, told through the lens of imagination and truth." Victory will start at 8 PM and tickets are still available.

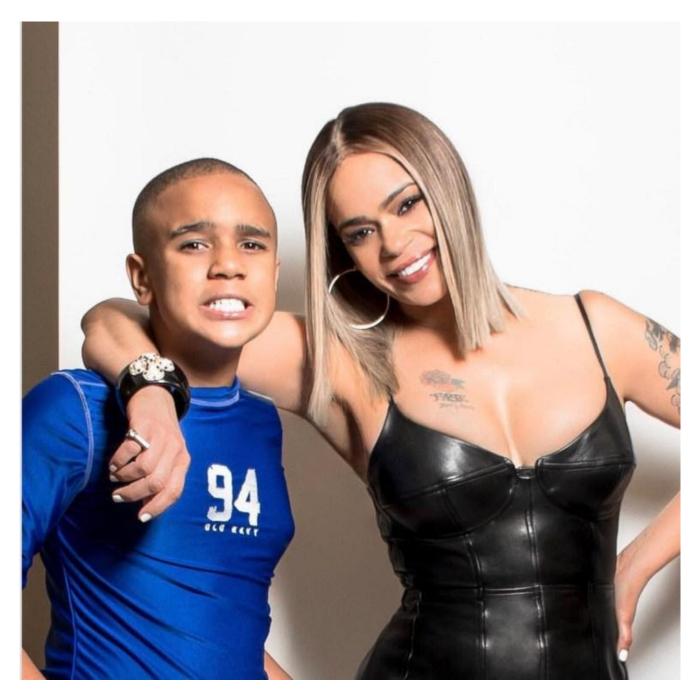
Grammy Award-Winning SingerSongwriter Faith Evans
Presents The Inaugural
Ryder's Room Gala, in
Conjunction with Her

Foundation, Ryder's Room Inc. and The City of Newark at The Newark Museum of Art



Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter and Newark native Faith Evans will present the Inaugural Ryder's Room Gala, in conjunction with her foundation, Ryder's Room Inc. and The City of Newark at The Newark Museum of Art on Saturday, September 27, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., 49 Washington Street in Newark, New Jersey.

As the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Ryder's Room Inc., Faith Evans established the foundation eight years ago in 2017. Based in Los Angeles, CA, Ryder's Room Inc. takes its name and inspiration from the founder's son, Ryder, who is now 18 years old and was diagnosed in early childhood with Autism Disorder, a neurodevelopmental characterized by differences in social communication and interaction. Evans and the Ryder's Room team and its Board of Directors aim to raise awareness surrounding various national issues related to Autism Spectrum Disorder and various related disabilities. The organization also seeks support in the areas of medical care, economic development, social services, and political awareness and advancement issues, especially in the Black and Brown communities, where the resources and support of disabilities are limited. Additionally, Evans and the Ryder's Room team host monthly support group meetings for parents of children with different abilities.



For the past 18 years, Faith Evans has spent most of her time caring for her son and family and advocating for Autism Spectrum Disorder and other disabilities, hence the formation of her foundation, Ryder's Room Inc. "As many of my family, friends, and business associates know, I am a mother first; there is nothing more important to me than my family," says the mother of four. "I've been on this journey with Ryder for more than 17 years, along with my newly adopted family of parents, adults, and children who are also managing and navigating a series of struggles, hardships, and challenges surrounding this disorder. We are doing our best to support each other through this journey. Ryder is doing well and I'm

proud of his growth and advancement."

This year's Inaugural Gala theme: "Awaken The Fire: Ignite, Empower and Elevate" will be hosted by Grammy Award-nominated recording artist MC Lyte, who will serve as the Mistress of Ceremonies. The entertainment lineup includes Comedian and Actor Mike Epps and Rapper and Songwriter Freeway with more entertainment to be announced in the coming weeks.



Top Row — Left to Right: Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka (honoree), MC Lyte (Mistress of Ceremonies), Mike Epps (Entertainment), Freeway (Entertainment); Bottom Row — Left to Right:

Liza Lawrence (honoree), Maliaka Mitchell (honoree), Andrew Burger (honoree), Safiyyah Muhammad (honoree)

The five esteemed honorees include Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka, who will receive the Elevate Award. Mayor Baraka is recognized nationally as a thought leader in the field of urban revitalization. He has also gained acclaim for his commitment to reducing crime in Newark and reimagining public safety by treating it as a public health issue. Mayor Baraka opened the Shani Baraka Women's Resource Center to provide complete care for women and families in crisis and transition. Under his leadership, the city has also undertaken a major effort to provide holistic care for residents without addresses. While serving as Mayor of Newark, he was also President of the NJ Urban Mayors Association and now its President Emeritus; Executive Board Member for the NJ League of Municipalities; Co-Chair of the National League of Cities Reimaging Public Safety Task Force; U.S. Conference of Mayors — Vice Chair for Ports, Transportation, and Communications Committee; and Member of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Local Government Advisory Committee.

Liza Lawrence will be presented with the Impact Award. Lawrence is an award-winning healthcare executive, community advocate, and visionary nonprofit leader with more than 15 years of experience in healthcare operations and a deep-rooted commitment to autism awareness and advocacy. She is the founder and CEO of Perfect Connection, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2019. Perfect Connection was born from Lawrence's firsthand experience navigating the complexities of raising two sons on the autism spectrum. Determined to ensure that other families have better access to resources, education, and support, she created the organization as a comprehensive platform for change. Under her leadership, Perfect Connection has directly impacted the lives of more than 500 children.

Maliaka Mitchell will receive the Empower Award. As the founder of Maliaka & Associates, she provides culturally competent, person-centered behavioral services across South California, including skills training and parent mentorship. Mitchell holds a Master of Science in Counseling with a focus on Rehabilitation and has contributed her expertise to initiatives such as police disability training, international outreach, and work at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Mitchell is a dedicated advocate, educator, and leader with more than 20 years of experience in the developmental disability field. With expertise in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and a foundation in special education, she has impacted countless lives through evidence-based interventions, program development, and inclusive advocacy.

Andrew Burger will be presented with the Encourage Award. Burger is a gifted artist, dedicated educator, and powerful voice within the autism community. Andrew, who is autistic himself, was nonverbal until the age of 4 and received special education services throughout his school years. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting and Graphic Design from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University and creates stunning artwork on commission. In addition to his artistic pursuits, Burger serves as a Registered Behavior Technician, working in both school and home settings to support individuals with multiple diagnoses. His journey, passion, and advocacy reflect the heart of Ryder's Room mission.

Safiyyah Muhammad will receive the Inspire Awards. Muhammad is a nationally respected disability policy advocate, transition specialist, and Accessibility Navigator. She is the founder of Urban Matters Advocacy & Action (The UMAA Network) and a proud mother and grandmother raising five neurodivergent children across the lifespan. A Partners in Policymaking graduate, Certified Autism Travel Professional, and NJLEND Fellow, Muhammad also served on the ADA Advisory Council at the Newark Museum of Art. She is a founding member of the National Black Disability Coalition and a former chair of NJCDD's Ad Hoc Committee on Equal Access. Her work centers lived experience, disability justice, and the fundamental right to belonging.

Ryder's Room executive team and Board of Directors include Faith Evans (founder and Chief Executive Officer), Zakia Benyard (Executive Director), Sherry Johnson-Alvarez (President), Dollie Peterson (Vice President), Cory Taylor (Treasurer), and Adrienne Henry-Horne (Secretary). The Board of Directors include, Jalia Simms (Board Member), Andrae Crenshaw (Board Member), Cheryl Flowers-Briggs (Board Member), Dr. George Jenkins (Board Member), Courtney Terry (Chair of Special Events), Joanne Morris (Board Member), George Peterson (Board Member), Brad Beckerman (Board Member), Ellisa K. Rawls (Chair of Community Engagement), Lark Adams (Chair of Media & Communications), SuSu Stewart (Board Member), Diana Boardley (Co-Chair of the Fundraising Committee), and Hannah Holdings (Co-Chair of the Fundraising Committee).

For more information on Ryder's Room, visit www.rydersroom.org. To purchase tickets and VIP packages, click here.

Follow Ryder's Room Inc. on <u>Facebook</u>, <u>Instagram</u>, and <u>YouTube</u>. Follow Faith Evans on <u>Facebook</u>, <u>Instagram</u>, and <u>YouTube</u>.

About Ryder's Room

Having gone through several difficulties finding proper schools, activities, and other services for my son, I realized not only the need to use my platform to advocate but also to use my platform to give back to those that have to face the same challenges but may not have many of the resources to navigate them. Ryder's Room, Inc. was created to help provide the highest level of resources for children and their families with disabilities and different needs, as well as professionals in the field.