

Actor Charles S. Dutton, Judge Daryl Traywick and Detroit Pistons Legend Isiah Thomas Inspire Black Men's Roundtable Tour Launch



When the Florida Coalition on Black Civic Participation (FCBCP) originally planned and hosted their 2012 Healthy, Wealth & Wise Mini-Expo and Black Men's Round Table (BMR) in Miami, FL, the organizers were unsure what to expect. But the gathering of Black men that included NBA Hall of Famer, Isiah Thomas; actor and producer, Charles S. Dutton ("Rock"); Dade County Circuit Judge Daryl Traywick; and Miami Police homicide detective and cast member of "48 Hours," Detective Ervans Ford, proved to be so powerful that the singular occasion has spawned the announcement of the FCBCP Black Men's Roundtable Statewide Tour. Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Orlando will be among the first stops.

“Our guest speakers triggered a lot of emotion in the men,” reveals Desmond Meade, chair of FCBCP Black Men’s Round Table, “Charles Dutton and Isiah Thomas spoke to the hearts of these men, relating to them on a universal level of brotherhood. We are simply overwhelmed with the positive feedback and excited for the opportunity to connect with men in other cities and states.”



Left to right: Desmond B. Meade, president Florida Rights Restoration Coalition & chair, BMR; Chief Jimmy Brown of Hot Talk on Hot 105, and Eric Rowe of The Home Team Network

A springboard of the popular National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP) “Black Women’s Roundtable Health Wealthy & Wise National Tour,” BMR will now address and focus on the concerns and issues of Black men. With the goal to uplift, educate and empower Black men and youth, the BMR tour will continue to provide important information related to health and wellness and stimulate honest discussions about issues relevant to Black men all in a mini-expo environment. Due to aggressive voter suppression efforts across the country – with Florida as the poster child – voter education and voter protection are a central component of the event.

“We are just so thankful to the Knight Foundation, as one of our sponsors, for their support to Florida Coalition. It is because of partners like them that we can continue to host these roundtable events, providing men and women a space to talk, commune, learn about their voting rights, and really make a difference in each other’s lives,” offers Salandra Benton, FCBCP Convener.



Isiah Thomas speaking at Black Men’s Round Table

Moderated by Miami Times senior editor, Kevin McNeir, and attorney Larry Handfield, the panels explored topics like criminal justice and domestic violence; physical, spiritual and mental health; and jobs, wealth and civic participation.

Adds Melanie L. Campbell, president & CEO, The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and convener, Black Women’s Roundtable, “Now more than ever it is crucial that Black men are provided avenues like the Black Men’s Round Table to combat the feelings of disenfranchisement and disempowerment that are so readily evidenced in many of our communities. The Florida Coalition’s Black Men’s Roundtable is aligned with the The National Coalition’s new national focus of engaging black men and boys to live their best lives.”

The Florida Coalition on Black Civic Participation is an affiliate of the The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to increasing civic engagement in Black and underserved communities. The current initiatives of The National Coalition include Black Youth Vote!, Black Women's Roundtable, and the Unity 2012 Voter Empowerment Campaign. They recently implemented the Black Youth Vote! men and boys civic engagement initiative supported by the Open Society Foundation. With the 2012 theme "Stand Your Ground," the Unity 2012 campaign works nationally with APRI, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Cost of Freedom Project, and other groups to ensure that black voters register to vote, verify their voting status, obtain proper identification and are allowed to cast a vote that counts on election day. For more information visit www.fcbbcp.org or www.ncbbcp.org.