



## R&B Songstress LaShell Griffin to Perform at the 2009 Gracie Awards Gala

(McLean, VA – May 26, 2009) – American Women in Radio and Television (AWRT) 2009 Gracie Award attendees will be treated to a special performance by R&B songstress **LaShell Griffin**, when the black-tie Awards Gala kicks off on Wednesday, June 3, 2009 at New York's Marriott Marquis Hotel.

LaShell, who has garnered fans in everyone from President Obama, Oprah Winfrey and Alicia Keys to Simon Cowell, Babyface and Cindy Lauper, recently released her sophomore album, *Dreams Are Possible*, featuring LaShell's soaring and deep timbre vocals. *Dreams Are Possible* is a work of inspiration, representing a philosophy LaShell lives by in her career and with her family.

As the winner of Oprah Winfrey's Pop Star Challenge in 2004, LaShell went on to land a Top 3 *Billboard* Gospel hit and a Top 40 *Billboard* R&B hit. She was invited to perform the National Anthem for then-Senator Barack Obama during several campaign stops, teamed up with Gospel star Jeff Majors in 2008/2009 for a *Blankets for the Homeless Tour*, where she and Jeff visited homeless shelters bearing blankets for the winter and performed in various cities around the country. LaShell's career is a family affair; her husband is her manager and helps to co-write on some songs, along with her two eldest sons (Lee Griffin II wrote the title track and Lee Griffin III and Rafiel Griffin contributed material to the album.)

LaShell has performed with Earth, Wind and Fire, Anita Baker, Brian McKnight, and Fantasia, among others. Speaking about the title track, LaShell proclaims, "It's one of my favorites because I feel like it can reach everyone's heart. No matter their age, religion or race as long as you have the desire to dream, you can make it happen!"

When LaShell performed on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* as a participant in Oprah's Pop Star Challenge, the judges praised her talent. Alicia Keys exclaimed, "The thing I love the most about you, besides the fact you gave me the chills, is that you control your voice in such a beautiful way." Simon Cowell simply stated, "You were absolutely fantastic!" And although not a judge herself, Oprah Winfrey declared, "LaShell has an amazing voice. When she opened her mouth and began to sing, the hair on the back of my neck stood up!"

The Gracies are presented by the Foundation of AWRT, the philanthropic arm of AWRT that supports educational programs, charitable activities, public service campaigns and scholarships to benefit the public, the electronic media and allied fields. The Gracie Awards, established in 1975, honors programming and individuals of the highest caliber in all facets of radio, television, cable and web-based media, including news, drama, comedy, commercials, public service, documentary and sports.

The event is made possible through the generous support of the 2009 title sponsor Dove and *The Campaign for Real Beauty* and the following additional sponsors: Arbitron, CBS News, CNBC, CNN, Disney-ABC Television Group, Ford Motor Company Fund, Katz Media Group, MTV Networks, National Public Radio, NBC, NCTA, Oprah Radio, The Rachael Ray Show, The Style Network, VCI Solutions, and WE tv.

For more information about the 2009 Gracies, please visit [www.thegracies.org](http://www.thegracies.org). For the most up-to-date, insider information, follow the Gracie Awards on Twitter @thegracies. **CREDENTIALLED PRESS:** For press information about covering the red carpet and the event, please contact JLM Public Relations at 212-431-5227.

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**About AWRT:** The year 2009 marks the 58th Anniversary of American Women in Radio & Television (AWRT), the longest established professional association dedicated to advancing women in media and entertainment. AWRT carries forth its mission by educating, advocating and acting as a resource to its members and the industry at large. Founded in 1951, AWRT works to improve the quality of electronic media; promote the entry, development and advancement of women in the field; foster communication and idea exchange; and give back to the community we serve.

**About The Foundation of AWRT:** The Foundation of AWRT is the philanthropic arm of American Women in Radio & Television, supporting educational programs, charitable activities, public service campaigns and scholarships to benefit the public, the electronic media and allied fields. The Foundation of AWRT has created partnerships and joint-initiatives with the National Middle School Association, the Emma Bowen Foundation, the American Red Cross and other organizations that are philosophically aligned with the mission of the Foundation of AWRT. The Foundation supports several public service campaigns, including most recently AWRT Empowering America, which pays tribute to many of America's most pioneering and inspiring women. Through this initiative, the Foundation of AWRT has adopted needy urban middle schools around the country and provided educational donations derived from collateral based on the Empowering America program. The Foundation also produces nationally acclaimed recognition programs, including the Gracie Awards®, a live, New York-based gala that honors exemplary programming created for, by and about women.