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National Conference for Media Reform Hosts All-Star Lineup

Historic event draws Hollywood actors, famed journalists, legendary civil rights leaders, renowned musicians, acclaimed scholars, grassroots activists to Memphis

MEMPHIS -- Riding a wave of unprecedented activism and interest around media issues, the 2007 National Conference for Media Reform -- hosted by Free Press -- will kick off this week in Memphis.

WHAT: 2007 National Conference for Media Reform

WHERE: Memphis Cook Convention Center, Memphis

WHEN: Jan. 12-14, 2007

WHO: Nearly 3,000 activists, media makers, journalists, policymakers, scholars and concerned citizens from across the country

Online registration for conference participants is now closed. However, those wishing to attend the conference can still register and pay at the conference site. Tuesday, Jan. 9 is the last day for members of the media covering the event to register for press credentials -- please send all requests by noon to credentials@freepress.net.

Conference speakers and presenters and Free Press staff are available for interviews or comment before and during the event. The full conference schedule is now available at: <http://www.freepress.net/conference/2007-program.pdf>

The event is packed with nearly 100 hands-on workshops, film screenings and interactive panels. See below for a list of some of the daily highlights of this momentous weekend:

THURSDAY, JAN. 11

9 p.m. -- Join Free Press and MoveOn.org Civic Action for SavetheInternet.com's Party for the Future at the Gibson Guitar Factory near historic Beale Street (145 Lt. George Lee Ave.).

FRIDAY, JAN. 12

(All events at the Memphis Cook Convention Center)

9:30 a.m. -- Welcome from Dr. Willie Herenton, Mayor of Memphis.

10 a.m. -- Opening plenary with legendary journalist Bill Moyers.

11:30 a.m. -- Press conference releasing new media ownership studies.

12:15 p.m. -- Rev. Jesse Jackson headlines the afternoon plenary.

1:15 p.m. -- Phil Donahue moderates "Inside Corporate Media: Can It Tell the Truth?" panel. Plus sessions on "The Fight over Media Ownership"; "Media and Elections"; "State Battlegrounds in Media Reform"; and more.

3:15 p.m. -- "Saving the Internet" explores what's next for the grassroots movement that made Net Neutrality a major issue last year; industry critics look at "Payola: Radio, Records and the FCC"; former FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani moderates a discussion on "Children & Media Policy"; and more.

8 p.m. -- "The Memphis Music Showcase & Rally" features appearances by Rev. Al Green's Gospel Choir, North Mississippi Allstars, Burnside Exploration, Jimbo & Olga, FCC Commissioners Michael Copps & Jonathan Adelstein, actor and activist Danny Glover, Amy Goodman of Democracy Now!, hip-hop activist Davey D and more.

SATURDAY, JAN. 12

(All events at the Memphis Cook Convention Center)

8 a.m. -- Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) addresses the conference.

9 a.m. -- FCC Commissioners take questions on what's happening in Washington; leaders discuss "Why Media Policy Is a Civil Rights Issue"; Dan Gillmor and Jay Rosen join a panel on "Citizen Journalism"; and more.

11 a.m. -- Reps. Maurice Hinchey (D-N.Y.), Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) and Sanders offer a "Capitol Hill Update"; Memphis musicians Sid Selvidge and James Alexander join a panel on "Music & Media Reform"; grassroots activists on "The Battle to Control America's Media"; and more.

1 p.m. -- Andy Bichlbaum of The Yes Men shows clips from his upcoming film.

2:30 p.m. -- Laura Flanders, Amy Goodman, Robert Greenwald and blogger Atrios highlight "Winning Alternatives"; D.C. policy experts look ahead at "Washington 2007"; "Hip-Hop Activism for Media Justice"; and more.

4:30 p.m. -- Veteran White House correspondent Helen Thomas debates "The Press at War & the War on the Press"; Media watchdogs David Brock, Janine Jackson and Norman Solomon; PBS's David Brancaccio leads a panel on "The Future of Public Broadcasting"; plus a discussion about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the media with Judge D'Army Bailey and other civil rights experts; and more.

8 p.m. -- A Keynote Event features Geena Davis, Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Media

Monopoly author Ben Bagdikian, former NAACP director Ben Hooks, Rev. Lennox Yearwood of the Hip-Hop Caucus, radio host Deepa Fernandes, Free Press founder Robert W. McChesney and other special guests -- plus a performance by The Bar-Kays.

SUNDAY, JAN. 14

(All events at the Memphis Cook Convention Center)

9 a.m. - Jeff Chester of the Center for Digital Democracy, Ms. Magazine executive editor Katherine Spillar, journalist Roberto Lovato and community media innovator Wally Bowen on "Envisioning the Future of Independent Media"; plus hands-on workshops and a presentation by leading media scholars.

11 a.m. - The 2007 National Conference for Media Reform concludes with stirring closing remarks from Academy award-winner and activist Jane Fonda and Van Jones of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights.

More information about the National Conference for Media Reform is available at <http://www.freepress.net/conference>

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Free Press is a national, nonpartisan organization working to reform the media. Through education, organizing and advocacy, we promote diverse and independent media ownership, strong public media, and universal access to communications.