

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20th Anniversary Date and Chairs Unveiled for Nashville Public Schools Hall of Fame Event

Celebrating two decades of support for public schools, Nashville Public Education Foundation names Johari Matthews and Tony Heard to lead Public Schools Hall of Fame anniversary

NASHVILLE, TENN. – January 31, 2024 – On September 5, [the Nashville Public Education Foundation](#) (NPEF) will commemorate its 20th [Public Schools Hall of Fame](#) luncheon at the Music City Center. At 11:30 a.m. in the Karl Dean Ballroom, NPEF will convene community, business, and education leaders to honor the exceptional individuals and organizations demonstrating an outstanding dedication to ensuring all children thrive in school. Notably, [First Horizon Foundation](#) has renewed its commitment to public schools as the event's presenting sponsor for the seventh year.

Leading the awards ceremony as event chairs are **Johari Matthews**, Vice President and Executive Director of Tennessee Titans Foundation and Community Impact with the Tennessee Titans, and **Tony Heard**, a partner at the business consulting firm, Infoworks, Inc., and NPEF board member and past board chair.

"For 20 years, the Public Schools Hall of Fame has been a testament to the unwavering community support for Nashville's educators and leaders," said **Katie Cour, President and CEO of the Nashville Public Education Foundation**. "We're grateful to have Johari and Tony to help us lead this landmark anniversary event and to inspire Nashvillians to come together in support of public schools and student success."

The NPEF Public Schools Hall of Fame annually recognizes those who show extraordinary dedication and commitment to improving outcomes for Nashville's public schools and students and who demonstrate the impact public schools have on our community. Established in 2005, the event has evolved into a significant catalyst, sparking vital conversations and actions focused on the central role of public schools and students in Nashville's community.

"Having graduated from Metro Schools, I had the extraordinary opportunity to see and interact with outstanding MNPS and community leaders devoted to enhancing student success," said **Johari Matthews, event chair**. "Especially now as a public school parent, it's a privilege to recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions and efforts of individuals and organizations across Nashville."

The award categories included in NPEF's annual Public Schools Hall of Fame are:

- The Nelson C. Andrews Distinguished Service Award is given to a leader in the Nashville community who is an advocate for children and youth, has had a significant impact on making Nashville a city that works for everyone, and inspires others to lead and serve.

The award is named after the late co-founder of the Nashville Public Education Foundation, Nelson C. Andrews, who was a fierce advocate for Nashville's public schools.

- The Distinguished Alumni Award is a celebration of graduates of Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) who have displayed leadership in their professions, have made significant civic, business, and/or community contributions, and have positively impacted the lives of others.
- The Thomas J. Sherrard Inspiring Innovation Award is given to an organization or program that exemplifies NPEF's commitment to bringing bold, innovative strategies to make a difference for Nashville's community and public schools. The award includes a \$10,000 grant.
- The Annette Eskind Inspiring Educator Award is given to a Metro Nashville Public Schools teacher with innovative practices or ideas that inspire students of all backgrounds to fall in love with learning while achieving academic success. The award provides grant funds of \$10,000 to support teachers' innovative practices.
- The Ronald L. Corbin Inspiring Leader Award, named in 2023 to honor Corbin's dedication to ensuring equitable access to high quality public schools, is given to an educational leader in MNPS who demonstrates exemplary achievements in public education at the district or school level. The award provides a grant to the winner's school to further their work.

[Nominations are now open](#) for the Nelson C. Andrews Distinguished Service Award and the Distinguished Alumni Award. The foundation invites the community to share input on community leaders who are outstanding advocates for youth and exemplary graduates of Metro Nashville Public Schools making notable contributions in their careers and communities.

"All three of my children graduated from MNPS and I look forward to honoring the great things happening in our public schools and city alongside Johari Matthews this September," said **Tony Heard, event chair and NPEF board member**. "The Public Schools Hall of Fame is a time to come together and support our public schools, and we are grateful for First Horizon's longstanding partnership for this event."

NPEF warmly invites all with interest to join in the celebration and participation of the Public Schools Hall of Fame event. More information is available online at <https://nashvillepef.org/hall-of-fame/>, including the opportunity to nominate a deserving community leader for one of this year's awards. Additionally, organizations interested in sponsoring this year's event are encouraged to contact Melinda Judd, Senior Vice President of Development and Outreach at NPEF, at Melinda.judd@nashvillepef.org.

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About the Nashville Public Education Foundation

The Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) is a nonprofit organization committed to ensuring every child can thrive in Nashville's public schools. NPEF works to improve student outcomes in Nashville's public schools by identifying challenges and advancing evidence-based solutions. Since 2002, NPEF's role as a catalyst for transformation has yielded tangible results in areas such as teacher professional development, teacher compensation, principal quality, and college access. Learn more at www.nashvillepef.org.

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