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HOME RUN FOR CONTESTANT DEBUT FOR MISS BAHAMAS UNIVERSE® “Empowered 11” stand out as they Chase the Sash, Crown and Title

NASSAU, Bahamas, (Monday, August 13, 2018) – On Sunday, August 12, 2018, Miss Bahamas Universe® hit a home run and unveiled 11 incredible, young women vying for the coveted title and crown. The highly, anticipated “Empowered 11” presented themselves at the Contestant Debut at the newly built Amphitheater at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, sharing their vision is for the country, as well as their aspirations for social and cultural platforms they are most passionate about in business attire with a one-on-one interview with event host and Newscaster Chester Robards. The audience got to know each of them, and the Empowered 11 shared insight of what the “Chasing the Sash” experience has been thus far.

The backgrounds of this year's crop of young ladies range from college students and athletes, to entrepreneurs and working professionals, or a combination of those designations. They are all unique in their own way. The ‘Empowered 11” Miss Bahamas Universe® 2018 Contestants in are: Dimarcia Bethel, Shantera Brown, Vernique Chandler, Gabriela Collie, Danielle Grant, Raven Hepburn, Ianthé Kellman, Samia McClain, Shauntae Miller, Devyevette Nagee and Selvanique Wright. Some of the contestant platforms include: Animal Abuse Awareness, Colourism, Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, Cervical Cancer Awareness and Sexual Abuse. The variety of causes was impressive, and it was clear their passion feel in line with their campaign causes.

The prize package for Miss Bahamas Universe® is valued at over \$70,000, which includes an all-expense paid, once-in-a-lifetime experience to represent The Bahamas at Miss Universe® in Thailand; a scholarship to attend Midwestern State University as an undergraduate or graduate student; a full wardrobe; local and international speaking engagements; cash prize; luxury jewelry; air travel; local and international advertising campaigns and hosting opportunities; personal coaching; media training; a modeling portfolio; one year of brand management; makeup, skin and hair care products and a whole lot more.

Tickets are available for upcoming events at www.missbahamaspageant.com. Online voting opens on Monday, August 27, 2018, so friends, family, supporters and fans have an opportunity to choose a favorite contestant through a special “People’s Choice” vote that will fast-track her into the top six, as the competition preliminaries and categories progress.

A new Miss Bahamas Universe® team, headed by Anthony Smith, is set to prepare the next Bahamian beauty queen to represent the country in Bangkok, Thailand this December at the prestigious Miss Universe® Competition. Anthony Smith is the 2018-19 National Director and the owner of the Miss Bahamas Universe® franchise. He acquired the license in May 2018. Mr. Smith is also President of Westpoint Global Media, a marketing, events and special projects agency that has forged alliances with

international partners and affiliates. The Miss Bahamas Universe® Competition's second managing partner is PJ Douglas Sands. PJ is widely heralded as a successful Bahamian business owner, hospitality consultant, financial advisor and celebrity planner with several companies including DS3 Global Strategies, LUXE Worldwide Events and Travel, MoneyWorks Financial Solutions and NABHOOD with offices in The Bahamas, Florida, Texas and California. Douglas Sands is no stranger to pageantry, having competed in over 23 international pageants and placed first runner up in Miss Bahamas Universe® 2000 after competing in Miss America New York, Miss USA New York and representing The Bahamas on numerous occasions in international competitions as an beauty queen and accomplished track and field athlete.

Miss Universe® debuted in 1952 as the most prestigious international pageant in the world. Brenda Major Barry was the first Miss Bahamas in 1961. The first queen to represent The Bahamas at Miss Universe® was Sandra Young Miller in 1963. Mr. Smith expressed that after 5 decades of participation at Miss Universe®, The Bahamas is still fighting for its rightful place at the pinnacle of the pageant world. We are still diligently in pursuit of bringing home the coveted crown, or at the very least, a place in the Semi-Finals. That would give a significant boost to The Islands of The Bahamas as the Pageant telecast and promotions before and after the pageant reach over 500 million viewers. Pageantry is an important economic tool which has proven to boost tourism and stopover visitors in many countries. In fact it can be equally as important to The Bahamas as Junkanoo and international sporting events.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity to build something that has long been a cultural tradition, as well as a part of history and heritage in some families," said Mr. Smith. "This year's theme is 'World View', which presents an opportunity for our young ladies to learn about other countries and their history," Mr. Smith said. "It also allows them to immerse themselves in information on both local and global events. This will greatly help the young woman who competes at Miss Universe® on December 16, 2018."

In early July, the Miss Bahamas Executive Board hosted a special, two-day event for the ladies to commence a 12-week intense orientation, training and empowerment workshop dubbed "Chasing the Sash Leadership Programme", at the Melia Nassau Beach Resort. Pageant trainers and Directors included PJ Douglas Sands, Director of Pageant Affairs, Dr. Lorneka Joseph, Director of Personal and Career Development, Darron Pickstock, Legal Advisor, Mr. Brett Claywell, Co-Executive Producer and Mrs. Kim Welcome, Vocal Image Coach.

"Our main goal is to ensure that the 2018 Contestants undergo the basics of what was needed in order for them to get a better understanding of the history of pageantry, what is expected of them as contestants and, moreover, as the new queen representing The Bahamas internationally," said Mr. Smith. "There's a lot of entrepreneurial training and other aspects of platform development the young ladies are undergoing, so they understand the Miss Universe® system more significantly, and the idea of its motto, 'Confidently Beautiful'."

Mr. Smith explained: "Given the limited time, as organizers we developed the "Chasing the Sash Leadership Programme" that is broad in scope and assist the new queen and all contestants. "A lot of what we have implemented is simply to move Miss Bahamas Universe® Programme in our country to the level of a 21st century marketplace. Our Executive Board's primary aim is to refresh ideas and evolve local concepts to meet international standards." Ms. Douglas Sands added, "For example, we have brought Toastmasters Club 1600 on board to partner with us in the training of the ladies in communication and public speaking. That has been a part of the tradition in the Miss Bahamas

Universe® franchise for decades. Polishing vocal image to meet an international 21st century marketplace is a key component for any young professional today.”

According to PJ Douglas Sands the “Chasing the Sash Leadership Programme was birthed out of a need to design a comprehensive training experience that benefits all of the contestants that come through the Miss Bahamas Universe® system.” Douglas-Sands stated that “what has been missing from Bahamian pageants are the development of attributes expected of a queen that can compete at an international level, plus develop each contestant into an empowered, confidently beautiful woman who is able to serve as a lifetime ambassador of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, able to represent well locally and abroad plus be knowledgeable and proud about our Bahamian identity, culture, art, music, history and the Miss Bahamas Universe® legacy.”

The current franchise has positioned itself to take confidently, beautiful contestants into multiple levels of training, because The Bahamas does not have a proper three or four tier pageant system, ranging from toddlers to pre-teens and teens and then Miss. Often, young women enter with little to no experience, which has in the past been perceived as a big disadvantage for The Bahamas at international competitions like Miss Universe®. Mr. Smith’s Executive Board has implemented extensive modeling and media sessions, and lectures by various experts in their professional areas.

According to Mr. Smith, “Pageants are viewed, for the most part, especially in The Bahamas, as entertainment and aesthetic, rather than the initiation of a national forum for young ladies to begin meaningful lives, or add to their current network. There are many variables to blame for this. But the new Miss Bahamas Universe® Executive Board is working diligently to provide the opportunities young women say they are seeking. Hence, our local and international partners and sponsors have bought into this new vision of pageantry, and are continuing to come on board.”

Mr. Smith is optimistic that the 2018 Miss Bahamas Universe® winner will make an indelible impression at the Miss Universe® competition; whomever that dynamic, young woman may be. Miss Bahamas Universe® sponsors include Midwestern State University, Bioré, Brightly Awake, Commonwealth Fabrics, DS3 Global Brand Strategies, Dupuch Publications, Influential Voice, Jergens, LUXE Worldwide Travel and Events, New York Dress, Rare Finds, Shoreline Distributors, The Beauty Shack, The Bold Catalog, The Shoal Restaurant, Toastmasters Club 1600, Vell Monkey Foot! Catering, Westpoint Global Media and others who will be mentioned in future releases.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the website at www.missbahamaspagant.com and Miss Bahamas Universe® Official Facebook page at www.facebook.com/missbahamauniverse. You can also follow Miss Bahamas Universe® on social media via Twitter at www.twitter.com/bahamasuniverse or Instagram at www.instagram.com/missbahamasuniverse. Tickets can be purchased online from our website or at EyeCandy Makeup in Harbor Bay Shopping Plaza, Rare Finds in Prince George Plaza, Mon Qir Fashion on Carmichael Road, or from any of our Miss Bahamas Universe® contestants.

About the Miss Universe® Organization

The 2018 Miss Universe Competition will take place in Bangkok, Thailand, and will air in the United States LIVE Sunday, December 16, 2018, at 10:00 PM ET live on FOX. Five-time Emmy® Award winner, and one of television’s favorite entertainers, Steve Harvey returns to host. The three-hour event will feature women representing nearly 100 countries. The Miss Universe Organization (MUO) is a global community that empowers women to realize their goals through experiences that build self-confidence and create opportunities for success. MUO believes that every woman should be “Confidently Beautiful.” MISS UNIVERSE®, MISS USA® and MISS TEEN USA® programs provide the 10,000 women who

participate annually an international platform to affect positive change through influential humanitarian and professional efforts.

About Miss Bahamas Universe®

Miss Bahamas Universe® believes in the empowerment of women as one develops the confidence needed to achieve personal best. A confident woman has the power to make real change, starting in our local community with the potential to take her influence from the Islands Of The Bahamas to the world. Our Organization seeks to fulfill the legacy and tradition as the official Miss Bahamas Pageant. Historically, Miss Bahamas Universe® queens have gone on to high-profile careers in law, science, government, hospitality, tourism, business, finance and broadcasting, as well as film, stage and television. The Miss Bahamas Universe® Competition will offer far more to all of the young women participating nationwide, including over \$70,000 in prizes, scholarships and gifts for Contestants and the Titleholder. Miss Bahamas Universe® has designed a competition and preparation regimen, which compliment the powerful, international Miss Universe® brand. Our vision is for a pageant system that is fair and attractive to the most beautiful, talented, educated, and confident young Bahamian women who want to serve as international ambassadors and spokeswomen. Miss Bahamas Universe® is also a unique opportunity to work with Corporate Bahamas to create a plethora of opportunities for young ladies who participate as contestants by partnering with our organization to truly live the mantra of “Confidently Beautiful,” as well as to expose the wider beauty, fashion, culture and artisan industries of The Islands Of The Bahamas to a global audience as the OFFICIAL Miss Bahamas Pageant.

About Westpoint Global Media

As an organization, Westpoint Global Media Inc. not only believes in producing an outstanding stage production together with a cadre of activities designed to crown a beautiful, young woman. Westpoint Media is a marketing, events and special projects agency founded by Anthony Smith that has forged alliances with international partners and affiliates. Incorporated in The Bahamas and the United States, Westpoint is the franchise holder for Miss Teen Bahamas Scholar as well as Miss Bahamas Universe.® Westpoint also manages a portfolio of local and international clients implementing marketing, branding and consulting strategies for products and services. Projects have included Miss Teen Bahamas International, Downtown Nassau Magazine, Magazine Bahamas, Top Barber & Stylist 242 Competition, Seahorse Institute’s Blue Tie Shindig, and Bahamas Amateur Bake-Off Competition.

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Photos & Links

- Downloadable Contestant, Executive Board and Event Photos: <http://bit.ly/2018bahamasPR>
- Miss Bahamas Universe Logo: bit.ly/MissBahamasLogo
- 2018 Contestants: missbahamaspgeant.org/contestants
- Yasmine Cooke, Miss Bahamas Universe® 2017: missbahamaspgeant.org/yasmine
- Executive Board: <https://missbahamaspgeant.org/our-team>