

**PRESS RELEASE: 2008 MISS AMERICA LIVE! Puts the Spotlight on National Judges
Saturday, January 26, 2008**

Live from Planet Hollywood, Las Vegas, on TLC

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J., Jan. 3 /PRNewswire/ -- 2008 *MISS AMERICA LIVE!* promises to be an exciting event with the announcement of the strikingly diverse panel of national judges. This year's panel of seven esteemed judges includes a legendary Olympic athlete, an edgy fashion designer, Hollywood's hottest casting director, the editor of a trendy magazine, a successful entrepreneur, one of CNN's most popular newscasters and today's favorite fitness trainer. They will evaluate the contestants from the preliminaries through the final night of competition, which will be premiering live from Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino in Las Vegas on Saturday, January 26, 2008 at 8:00 PM ET live/PT tape-delayed, exclusively on TLC. Plus, this year America will get to play the part of judge as TLC introduces Miss America: America's Choice, an online competition designed to choose the 16th finalist.

The judges were announced by Sam Haskell, Chairman of the Board for the Miss America Organization (MAO), Art McMaster, President and CEO of MAO, and Anthony Eaton, Producer of 2008 *MISS AMERICA LIVE!* This year's panel of judges is comprised of experts in each of the fields that a young woman must excel in, in order to be named Miss America. Miss America must be beautiful, talented, intelligent and well-spoken, a leader, have a commitment to her community, be contemporary in her style and fashion -- a relatable and individual "it girl" who can connect with today's modern woman, as well as being physically fit. To determine who will be Miss America 2008 the following panel of judges has been selected:

- From the Field of Beauty and Fashion -- TRACE AYALA -- This Memphis-born fashion designer is the co-founder of William Rast denim with his childhood friend, Justin Timberlake. Ayala designs comfortable and stylish denim with quality fabrics and a well-designed fit.
- From the Field of National Press defining today's "It Girl" -- SARAH IVENS -- Ivens is the Editor-in-Chief of OK! Magazine, which under her key direction has become America's fastest-growing publication and one of the most successful magazines specializing in celebrity news.
- From the Field of Community Service -- JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE -- Considered one of the greatest athletes of all time, Joyner-Kersee is the first woman to win back-to-back gold medals in the seven disciplined event heptathlon. Since retiring from competition, Joyner-Kersee has devoted herself to giving back to her community. As Founder and Chairperson of the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Foundation, she spearheaded fundraising efforts to collect more than \$12 million to build a safe haven for young people.
- From the Field of Talent -- JASON LA PADURA -- This native New Yorker is the casting genius behind the Disney Channel phenomenon "High School Musical" and will soon begin work on the feature film, "High School Musical 3." He is currently casting the NBC hit "Heroes" and CBS' "Cane."
- From the Field of Fitness -- KIM LYONS -- As a star of NBC's hit show, "The Biggest Loser," Lyons exemplifies fitness. Lyon's first book will be published in January 2008.

She is also featured in the bestselling "The Biggest Loser" Cookbook, and "The Biggest Loser" Workout DVDs.

- From the Communications/Interview Field -- ROBIN MEADE -- As the lead news anchor for Headline News' morning show, "Morning Express with Robin Meade," she has anchored the network's coverage of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Before joining CNN, Meade worked at NBC Chicago where she covered the 1996 Olympics, which included reporting on the Centennial Olympic Park bombing. Meade is a former Miss Ohio who competed in the 1992 Miss America Pageant. She is the recipient of two Emmy Awards.
- From the Field of Leadership Development -- JAMES ARTHUR RAY -- Ray is the President and CEO of James Ray International, a multi-million dollar corporation dedicated to teaching individuals to create wealth in all areas of their lives: financially, relationally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. He has been featured on Extra, The Today Show, Larry King Live, and the Oprah Winfrey Show for The Secret.

This year, America has the opportunity to select a surprise 16th pageant finalist with Miss America: America's Choice, an online competition that allows viewers to vote for their favorite Miss America contestant. Fans can vote by visiting <http://www.tlc.com/missamerica> beginning on Friday, January 4, after the first episode of TLC's new reality special, *MISS AMERICA: REALITY CHECK* and through the final episode on Saturday, January 26 (3 AM EST). The contestant with the most votes, who is not already included as a top 15 finalist, will be chosen as "America's Choice," and be revealed during the *MISS AMERICA LIVE!* finale.

MISS AMERICA: REALITY CHECK premieres January 4, at 10 PM (ET/PT) and airs consecutive Friday nights leading up to the *MISS AMERICA LIVE!* finale on January 26. Hosted by Michael Urie, the four-part series is designed to get these 52 state winners to forget everything they've learned in "pageant schools" over the years ... the walk ... the talk ... the hairspray ... and prepare them for the final competition to select Miss America 2008 ... the relatable "it girl" who can connect with today's modern woman.

SOURCE Miss America Organization