



Jan 18, 2016 | BALTIMORE

## Ford Extends Commitment to African American Community with Forum, National Outreach Honoring Men of Courage

- Ford convenes Men of Courage forum where diverse group of men take action to provide social and financial capital for projects honoring black men
- National Men of Courage contest calls on black men to share stories and solutions for building communities; winner to be announced May 17 at Ford Freedom Awards in Detroit
- Ford continues work with 2016 Grammy nominee Big Sean and former Detroit mayor and NBA Hall of Famer Dave Bing to elevate positive stories from a range of audiences

**BALTIMORE, Jan. 18, 2016** – Ford Motor Company Fund is celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day by launching a national initiative around Men of Courage – a program that honors and amplifies the accomplishments of African American men with the goal of strengthening communities and creating positive social change.

The initiative consists of a national contest of inspirational stories from which Ford will select a winner to honor at Ford Freedom Awards May 17 in Detroit. Ford Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford, is also developing a free online curriculum and teaching guide that profiles 20 prominent African American men. The program seeks to enable junior and secondary high school students to create visions for success. Visit [www.MenOfCourage.com](http://www.MenOfCourage.com) for contest and curriculum information.

The national contest is being launched as part of a Men of Courage gathering at Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture in Baltimore. Ford, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, and 100 Black Men of America convened a diverse group of 60 black men ranging in age from 17 to 70 for a

daylong forum of storytelling, visioning and developing plans for action.

“Ford has a long history of supporting the African American community and is a trusted source when it comes to building communities,” said forum participant Burt Jordan, Ford vice president, Global Vehicle and Powertrain Purchasing & Supplier Diversity. “Men of Courage has the power to bring together African American men in a way that will positively impact people throughout the country.”

Group members have made more than 300 commitments to provide social and financial capital to projects honoring black men. These include support for a yearlong program at Reginald F. Lewis Museum around the theme Year of the Black Male, which explores past, present and future issues facing black men. Members also have pledged to help scale Shop Talk – a monthly panel discussion; the series was developed by Sebastian Jackson, a Detroit-based entrepreneur and owner of Social Grooming, an innovative barbershop and community meeting place.

“I believe we have the talent and skills to solve today’s social challenges right in our own communities,” said Calvin G. Butler Jr., CEO, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company. “Men of Courage is an important program because it provides support to those who are developing solutions, and gives our young people a guide to how they can create a brighter future for themselves.”

Launched as a pilot program in Detroit last year, Men of Courage connects diverse black men from local communities with a growing list of renowned advocates and celebrities. Together, these groups seek to support one another and align to build relationships in an effort to help improve the perception of African American men in society.

“After being a part of the Men of Courage pilot program and witnessing the benefits of uplifting our community, I am proud to lend my voice and take this effort to the national level,” said Big Sean, Grammy-nominated multi-platinum-selling artist.

Ford is also continuing to work with former Detroit mayor and NBA Hall of Famer Dave Bing to elevate positive stories from a range of audiences.

The company’s support of the African American community dates back to the early 20th century when Ford was the largest employer of African Americans in the auto industry. Now, with signature initiatives including Men of Courage, the annual Ford Freedom Awards and Historically Black Colleges & Universities Community Challenge, Ford is building on that support.

Follow the online conversation using #MenOfCourage.

## About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services works with community and global partners to advance driving safety, education and community life. Ford Motor Company Fund has operated for more than 65 years with ongoing funding from Ford Motor Company. Ford Driving Skills for Life is free, interactive, hands-on safety training focused on skill development and driving techniques, while addressing inexperience, distractions and impaired driving. Innovation in education is encouraged through Ford Blue Oval Scholars, Ford Next Generation Learning and other inspiring programs that enhance high school learning and provide college scholarships and university grants. The Ford Volunteer Corps enlists more than 30,000 Ford employees and retirees each year to work on local projects that strengthen their communities and improve people's lives in more than 40 countries around the world. For more information, visit <http://community.ford.com>.

## About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan. The company designs, manufactures, markets and services a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs, electrified vehicles and Lincoln luxury vehicles, provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company and is pursuing leadership positions in electrification, autonomous vehicles and mobility solutions. Ford employs approximately 202,000 people worldwide. For more information regarding Ford, its products and Ford Motor Credit Company, please visit [www.corporate.ford.com](http://www.corporate.ford.com).