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Celebrities Announced For 500 Festival Parade

INDIANAPOLIS – The IPL 500 Festival Parade, scheduled for noon, Saturday, May 24 in downtown Indianapolis, will once again feature a diverse line-up of celebrities. The 500 Festival announced today that Floyd Mayweather Jr., Julianne Hough, Drew Lachey, Alison Sweeney, Marlee Matlin, Sabrina Bryan, Indiana Pacers players Jeff Foster and Danny Granger, Indiana Fever players Tamika Catchings and Katie Douglas and Congressional Medal of Honor recipients Corporal Tibor Rubin and Retired Lt. Col. Bruce P. Crandall are the first celebrities and VIP's to be scheduled to participate in this year's celebration.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. is universally recognized as the best pound-for-pound boxer and is a world champion in five weight classes. Mayweather has a 39-0-0 record. His 2007 victory over Oscar de la Hoya and Ricky Hatton earned him the 2007 Fighter of the Year award from the Boxing Writers Association of America. Mayweather is the current World Boxing Associations Welterweight World Champion (147 pounds) and also has held world title belts at junior middleweight, light welterweight, lightweight and super featherweight divisions.

Julianne Hough is a professional ballroom dancer best known as dance partner for Helio Castroneves on the ABC series, Dancing with the Stars. Hough is also a rising music artist with her debut country album "Julianne Hough" due out this month. Hough with sing the national anthem before the start of the 92nd running of the Indianapolis 500.

Drew Lachey is best known as a member of the Motown recording group 98 Degrees. The four-part harmony group recorded four albums and sold over 8 million records worldwide. He has made several guest appearances on primetime television, acting and hosting, starred in independent features and was seen weekly on the hit MTV reality show Newlyweds. Lachey also played Mark Cohen in the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning Broadway show Rent. His most recent credit is being crowned the champion of Dancing with the Stars on ABC.

Actress Alison Sweeney is best known for her work as Samantha Brady on the NBC soap opera Day of Our Lives. This role has earned Sweeney four Soap Opera Digest Awards and a Daytime Emmy. Sweeney is also the host of the NBC's America's Biggest Loser. Sweeney has also made several appearances including Las Vegas, Friends, American Dreams, Celebrity Poker, Celebrity Fear Factor, Friends and Weakest Link

Marlee Matlin won the Academy Award in 1986 for her debut in Children of a Lesser God. She continues to be the youngest winner in the Best Actress category, and one of the few actors to win for their debut performance. Matlin is also known for her work on the television series Reasonable Doubts and Picket Fences. She participated in the sixth season of Dancing with the Stars.

Sabrina Bryan is best known as a member of the girl group, The Cheetah Girls. She, too, participated in season five's Dancing with the Stars. Sabrina and her partner, Mark Ballas, were the first to receive a perfect score of 30 in week four of competition. Their earlier-than-anticipated elimination is said to be one of 2007's most shocking TV moments.

Danny Granger is the Forward for the Indiana Pacers. He attended University of New Mexico and Bradley University where he was a

Civil Engineering major. In the 2005 NBA draft Granger was the 17th pick. He led the 2007-2008 season, for the Pacers in averaging 19 points per game, and started in all 80 games.

Jeff Foster is the 6'11" Center for the Indiana Pacers. He has played for the Pacers since being drafted in 1999. Before playing for the Pacers he played basketball at Texas State University.

Tamika Catchings was drafted by Indiana Fever after playing basketball for the Tennessee Lady Volunteers from 1997-2001. She is the small forward for WNBA. Catchings is a leading figure in the Indianapolis community, having started the Catch the Stars Foundation, Inc. which helps disadvantaged youth achieve their dreams. Catchings is a 5-time WNBA All-Star and 5-time All-WNBA selection. She is also President of the WNBA Players Association.

Katie Douglas joined the Indiana Fever in February of 2008. She attended Purdue University as a Communications Major. In 2001 Douglas was named Big Ten Conference "Player of the Year" and 2001's Big Ten Conference Suzy Favor Award which is given to the conference's female athlete of the year across all sports. She helped lead Purdue to an NCAA Women's Division I Basketball Championship in 1999.

Corporal Tibor Rubin is a Holocaust survivor who is recognized with the 2005 Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery as a prisoner of war (POW) during the Korean War. Corporal Rubin spent two years as a POW in a Chinese concentration camp. When given the opportunity to leave, Corporal Rubin chose to remain in the prison camp to help provide food and medical treatment to other soldiers. He is credited with saving the lives of as many as 40 of his fellow prisoners.

Retired Lt. Col. Bruce P. Crandall is recognized with the 2007 Congressional Medal of Honor for his leadership, heroism and courage during the Vietnam's Battle of Ia Drang on November 14, 1965. Crandall led a flight of 16 helicopters into Landing Zone X-Ray Ia Drang Valley and is credited with evacuating some 70 wounded comrades. The craft he was flying was unarmed.

The more than 300,000 spectators who are expected to line the two-mile parade route will get a glimpse of these celebrities along with Grand Marshal Patricia Heaton, R&B super group the O'Jay's , 33 starting drivers of the 92nd Indianapolis 500, more than 80 specialty units, floats, marching bands and entertainment groups, giant inflatable balloons and costumed characters including Donnie and Eliza Thornberry, Cosmo and Wanda, the Pink Panther and the Care Bears.

The IPL 500 Festival Parade has grown to be one of the signature events in the U.S. each year. It consistently ranks among the top three parades in the nation including the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Themed "Fuel the Dream," this year's parade is a true representation of the power and pageantry of the month of May - a Hoosier tradition for 51 years with a television package that will bolster the Parade's national presence. The IPL 500 Festival Parade will be televised nationally on ESPN2 from 5-6:30 p.m. EDT; and locally on WISH TV 8 from 8-10 p.m.