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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **BLACK WARRIOR RIVERKEEPER HAS A TRUE FRIEND IN LORRAINE BRACCO, AS MRS. ROBINSON**

*“Sopranos” star organizing Birmingham fundraiser to help defend Alabama’s  
Black Warrior River.*

**New York** – Recently, actress Lorraine Bracco agreed to coordinate a cast party fundraiser for Black Warrior Riverkeeper®, a citizen-based, non-profit organization, dedicated to protecting and restoring Alabama’s Black Warrior River. This cast party benefit will take place after the February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004, opening night performance of *The Graduate*, in Birmingham, Alabama. Lorraine Bracco is starring as Mrs. Robinson.

Black Warrior Riverkeeper is aligned with over 115 Waterkeeper programs across the globe underneath the Waterkeeper Alliance® based in Tarrytown, New York. Lorraine Bracco, an active board member of Hudson Riverkeeper since 1998, coordinated a similar cast party fundraiser at Sardi’s after Broadway’s opening night performance of *The Graduate*, benefiting the Waterkeeper Alliance. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is the President of the Waterkeeper Alliance.

**Birmingham** – After Birmingham’s opening night performance of *The Graduate* at the BJCC Concert Hall, Lorraine Bracco and the cast will host a cast party with Black Warrior Riverkeeper at:

**Tutwiler Hotel** – 2021 Park Place – Birmingham, Alabama 35203

Black Warrior Riverkeeper is dedicated to defending the entire 6,276 square miles of the Black Warrior River watershed. According to the most recent census, the approximate population of all of the counties in the Black Warrior watershed is 1,078,144. The Cahaba and Black Warrior Rivers are the only two river systems contained entirely within the state of Alabama. David Whiteside founded Black Warrior Riverkeeper in November 2001, under Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s guidance.

The Black Warrior River is a major source of drinking water in Alabama, serving as the primary source of water for Tuscaloosa and supplying over 35% of Birmingham's water. However, the Black Warrior is a forgotten resource that is vital to Alabama's citizens. Our water is being threatened at every angle, from toxic chemicals and bacteria to erosion. Many polluters have grown accustomed to lawlessness in the watershed due to lack of enforcement in the region. Like the Interstate highway driver who constantly speeds to increase efficiency with illegal and reckless abandon, many polluters on the Black Warrior River routinely break environmental laws, knowing that there are no effective "speed traps" to stop them. . . Black Warrior Riverkeeper is that speed trap.

Despite being such a new organization, Black Warrior Riverkeeper has accomplished a lot in two years. The organization joined in a lawsuit against Sloss Industries in Birmingham, for illegally dumping excessive amounts of cyanide into a tributary of the Black Warrior. The lawsuit forced Sloss Industries to reach a settlement with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management – the largest settlement in ADEM's history. Among other requirements, this notorious polluter will have to fix their cyanide problem; donate around 350 acres of land in Tarrant, along the headwaters of this Black Warrior tributary, plant 25,000 trees on this land, and pay a civil penalty of \$375,000. This property will forever protect about 3 miles of the origins of this tributary.

Lorraine Bracco is almost as well known nationally for her work with Hudson Riverkeeper defending the majestic Hudson, as her roles in *Goodfellas* and *The Sopranos*. The Hudson Riverkeeper was started in the mid 1960s, before the federal Clean Water Act of 1972. The charter Riverkeeper on the Hudson inspired the creation of similar Waterkeeper programs nationwide, eventually leading to the creation of the umbrella group called the Waterkeeper Alliance. Bracco's diverse work with the Hudson Riverkeeper and Waterkeeper Alliance affects the lives of millions of people in the Hudson Valley, including New York City. Her heroic efforts are inspiring and contagious. Lorraine Bracco is modestly and tirelessly educating citizens about water pollution issues, while raising funds for the benefit of watersheds nationwide. The Waterkeeper Alliance, specifically Hudson Riverkeeper, is Lorraine's cause, and she fights hard for America's water.

Black Warrior Riverkeeper credits Lorraine Bracco, Bobby Kennedy Jr., and John Hoving and his company – UNCLE Inc. (United Network for Creative Licensing & Events) for making this benefit a reality. Hoving, whose uncle, Walter Hoving, founded Tiffany's and Co., is an entrepreneur himself, as a founder of the Keeper Springs bottled-water company, with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Keeper Springs is available from Washington D.C. to Vermont and donates all of its profits to the Waterkeeper Alliance and local Waterkeepers located in states where the bottled-water is sold. John Hoving was the catalyst for the Black Warrior Riverkeeper fundraiser.

Founded in 2001, Black Warrior Riverkeeper is the only citizen based organization working to defend Alabama's entire Black Warrior watershed. The organization's mission is the protection, preservation and restoration of the Black Warrior River watershed for the benefit of its people.