

BLACK WARRIOR RIVERKEEPER –

The Graduate and Sopranos Star, Lorraine Bracco, Goes Above and Beyond To Support Alabama's Black Warrior Riverkeeper

February 18, 2004

On February 17, 2004, Lorraine Bracco hosted a cast party fundraiser benefiting Alabama's Black Warrior Riverkeeper, following the opening night performance of The Graduate. This successful event raised a considerable amount of money for the new non-profit river protection organization. Black Warrior Riverkeeper is committed to defending Alabama's Black Warrior River and its tributaries from egregious polluters who are violating the law.

Black Warrior Riverkeeper was founded in November 2001, by David Whiteside (Mtn. Brook). The purpose of a Riverkeeper is to keep polluters in line by patrolling the watershed, analyzing permits, working with citizens, and using various other strategies. If a polluter is suspected of violating the law, the Riverkeeper investigates and brings evidence to the Board of Directors consisting of an attorney, a biologist, concerned citizens, and local businesspeople. The Board, various experts, and even other Waterkeeper programs nationwide collaborate to find solutions. Nelson Brooke (Mtn. Brook) is the Black Warrior Riverkeeper, and Mark Martin (Southside) is the organization's chief prosecuting attorney. David Tidwell (Mt. Olive) is the President of the Board of Directors.

Besides, the fundraiser Ms. Bracco went above and beyond for the organization, raising awareness through local media outlets, telling them about what the Riverkeepers are accomplishing in Alabama and nationwide. In her 20+ interviews with Alabama reporters, she talked about Black Warrior Riverkeeper in every single one. Her interviews spanned from long before opening night, through the closing of the play in Birmingham. On February 22, 2004, The Sopranos star recorded a public service announcement for the organization; Ms. Bracco even tirelessly sold t-shirts to the cast, crew and her fans.

Lorraine Bracco has served as a board member of Hudson Riverkeeper in New York for almost a decade, but she is not just another celebrity lending her name. She spent a year at Pace University Law School, in White Plains, New York, helping the Hudson Riverkeeper sue polluters up and down the Hudson. Lorraine Bracco is a close friend of Robert F. Kennedy Jr, and Ms. Bracco is a longtime supporter of the Waterkeeper Alliance, of which Kennedy is the President. Kennedy introduced the actress to his godson, David Whiteside, on the Hudson River in 1996. Lorraine Bracco is also major supporter of Black Warrior Riverkeeper and was honored to host a cast party benefit for the non-profit, and the organization is very fortunate to have had this unique fundraising opportunity. She is an aggressive and knowledgeable advocate for water bodies across America. Bracco lives on the Hudson in New York.

Lorraine was nominated for an Academy Award with her performance in Goodfellas. Most of you are probably familiar Lorraine Bracco's work as Dr. Melfi in America's favorite mob family drama, The Sopranos. Other notable performances by Ms. Bracco include: Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, Radio Flyer, Medicine Man, Basketball Diaries, Riding In Cars with Boys, and most recently The Sopranos. If you missed Ms. Bracco in Birmingham starring as Mrs. Robinson, in The Graduate, she'll be returning with the rest of the cast of The Sopranos on March 7.

While in Birmingham, Ms. Bracco and other Graduate cast members, also managed to make a tearful visit to Birmingham's Civil Rights Museum, during her stay with Black Warrior Riverkeeper's co-founder, David Whiteside, who is the great nephew, of Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr, a pivotal figure in the civil rights movement. Whiteside is the godson of Johnson biographer, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. While in Birmingham, Bracco dined at Dreamland, Jim'N'Nicks, and The Original House of Pancakes with members of Black Warrior Riverkeeper, and fell in love with Alabama's barbeque.

Bracco and the cast and crew of The Graduate unanimously fell in love with Birmingham, during the Broadway hits duration in Birmingham. Black Warrior Riverkeeper and the Birmingham Broadway Series played a pivotal role in making separating Birmingham from the rest of the stops on Lorraine Bracco and the cast and crew's stops.

THOSE ATTENDING:

BIRMINGHAM

David Barry, Pamela Hamrick, Kimberly Crowe, James Lowery, Mark Martin, Arthur Crenshaw, Seth Johnson, Addie Sluder, Danielle Watson, Robin Sutton, Nancy Boutwell, Loren Peters, Sean Smith, Kristi Sasser, Lynn Lelshman, Johnny Kinney, Brian Boehm, Leigh May, Randy Gachet, Patpat Gachet,

ROEBUCK

Kim Rafferty

VESTAVIA HILLS

Allen Borden

HOMEWOOD

Roger Conville, Dale Conville, Don Stewart, Sue Ellen Brown, Phyllis McCombs, Tom Selden, Amy Vickers,

MOUNT OLIVE

David Tidwell, Beverly Tidwell, Michael Tidwell

MOUNTAIN BROOK

Dell Brooke, Dixon Brooke, Nelson Brooke, Carter Brooke, Virginia Seibels, Nancy Thompson, George Thompson, Caroline Thompson, Joel Connally, Will Robertson, Ann Sweeney, Shap

Sweeney, Corbett Scott, Brooke Tinsley, Mauricio Papapietro, Claudio Papapietro, Jennis Warren, Tim Anderson, Marion Nolan, Roseanna Whiteside, Lauren Whiteside

IRONDALE

Jeff Pearson

TUSCALOOSA

René Wathen and John Wathen, (Hurricane Creekkeeper)

NEW YORK

Lorraine Bracco (Hudson Riverkeeper), Steve Fleischli (Waterkeeper Alliance), John Hoving, Devon Sorvari, Johnathan Kaplan, Bill Hill, Winslow Corbett, Corinna May, Dennis Parlato, Jim Poulos, Kate Levy, Denis Cormier, Tracy Grosword, Brian Russell, John Leonard Thompson, and Dawn Marcoccia

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

Jim Phillips (Chattahoochee Riverkeeper)

TROY, AL

Mike Mullen (Choctawhatchee Riverkeeper)

GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

Derrick Evans

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QUESTIONS?

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