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**The First All-Black Expedition to Climb Mount Everest  
to Attend the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Bayou Classic**

*Members of the Full Circle Everest team to be in New Orleans for Bayou Classic*

NEW ORLEANS – The Bayou Classic announced today that both Grambling University Foundation, Inc. and the Southern University System Foundation, Inc., will welcome members of **The Full Circle Everest** team to the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Bayou Classic, presented by Procter & Gamble.

The Full Circle Everest, which began its journey into the Himalayas after months of training and trekking in May 2022, has become the first all-Black expedition to make it to the top of Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world above sea level.

More than 6,000 thrill-seekers have summited Mount Everest, the highest point on Earth at 29,032 feet of elevation. Fewer than 10 of those climbers have been Black. The 11-person group that makes up the Full Circle Everest team includes a high school science teacher, an Iraq War veteran and a small-business owner. The members of the team come from across the U.S. — except for one, who's from Kenya.

“While only few have ever summited Mount Everest, and even fewer Black climbers, the Full Circle Everest team showcases to all of us that we are all capable of doing anything – especially those students of historically black colleges and universities,” said Dottie Belletto, President and CEO of NOCCI (New Orleans Convention Company, Inc.), the event management firm for the 49th Annual Bayou Classic. “We welcome them to Bayou Classic and look forward to all of our family, fans and friends being inspired to accomplish whatever their Everest is.”

Bayou Classic will welcome five members of the team, including:

**Philip Henderson**

*A native of San Diego, California, Philip, who now lives in Colorado, is a pioneer for the black community having worked in the outdoor industry for almost three decades. He is*

*passionate about providing opportunities for others to experience climbing and skiing and has spent time volunteering for youth and community-based programs around the world. Having spent many years working skiing and climbing in the US Kenya, Nepal and Chile, South America, Philip has been on several major expeditions including Everest, Denali, Kilimanjaro and Mt Kenya.*

### **Rosemary Saal**

*Rosemary Saal is an outdoor enthusiast, educator, and Seattle transplant currently living in Northern California. Since 2016, she has worked primarily as a backpacking field instructor with the National Outdoor Leadership School and in the summer of 2019, she began her journey of working in the mountaineering program for the school as well.*

### **Thomas Moore**

*Born and raised in the small town of Cartersville, Georgia, Thomas developed a passion for travel as a young man, touring through scores of countries, where he relished experiencing new cultures. Moore currently lives in Denver, Colo.*

### **Fred Campbell**

*Since he was a child, Fred Campbell has loved challenges and adventure. For as long as he can remember, these loves have pushed him toward football and math, both of which for him would continue passionately through college. Unfortunately, he had to stop playing football, but that lead him to pursue a PhD in statistics and fall in love with climbing. He is passionate about sharing climbing with others and has taught introductory climbing classes through the Momentum climbing gym in Houston and in his current home of Seattle, Wash.*

### **James Kagambi**

*James Kagambi (KG) began his guiding career in Kenya as a NOLS field instructor. His patience and teaching ability grew from his experience as a grade schoolteacher, coaching sports, and teaching traditional African music.*

The manager of the Full Circle Everest team, Renee Alston, will also be joining team members in New Orleans.

“There is a lack of representation of Black people in mountaineering and in high-altitude mountaineering and it's our duty to bring this to our communities, to our young people and talk about the benefits of being outdoors and connecting with nature and having a healthy lifestyle throughout their lives,” said Philip Hendeson, Expedition Leader of Full Circle Everest. “Being in New Orleans for Bayou Classic, the granddaddy of all HBCU football classics, provides our team the ability to inspire others to explore the outdoors and showcase that we are all capable of anything – even reaching the peak of the highest mountain in the world.”

The Bayou Classic, ranked as the #1 HBCU Classic in the nation, is the iconic collegiate gridiron matchup between Southern University and Grambling State University. The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Bayou Classic, presented by Procter & Gamble, will be played on Saturday, November 26, 2022, at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans. The Full Circle Everest Team will be a part of various

events throughout the Bayou Classic weekend, such as the Coaches Luncheon, the Business at Bayou event, the Bayou Classic Greek Show & Battle of the Bands, Bayou Classic parade and Bayou Classic gameday.

### **About Full Circle Everest**

Full Circle Everest's mission is to inspire, motivate and globalize connecting to nature, by providing a comfortable pathway into outdoor activities of your choice and providing opportunities to move forward in the outdoor industry. (<https://www.fullcircleeverest.com/>)

### **About Bayou Classic**

The legendary game between Grambling State University and Southern University, the Bayou Classic has proven to be a steadfast beacon of legacy and tradition that extends beyond the HBCU community. Fans from across the nation journey to witness the electrifying football game between Grambling State and Southern, while eagerly awaiting the highly anticipated halftime show featuring two of the greatest marching bands in the nation. For more information, visit [www.mybayouclassic.com](http://www.mybayouclassic.com).

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