FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dillard University presents 70th annual Holiday Concert
featuring special guest Richard Smallwood

(New Orleans) – It’s been a tradition in Gentilly for 70 years: the annual Holiday Concert showcasing the stellar talent of Dillard University’s renowned choir. The concert – featuring Christmas carols, traditional hymns, gospel classics, and jazzy holiday music – will be held on Wednesday, December 13 at 7:30 p.m. in Dillard’s Lawless Memorial Chapel, 2601 Gentilly Blvd. The event is free and open to the public; doors open at 6:45 p.m.

This year’s music extravaganza – “A Child is Born” – will include selections featuring Grammy and Dove Award-winning gospel great Richard Smallwood. Other special guests will include gospel singer Charrisse Nelson-McIntosh and jazz chanteuse Mary Griffin. The event is directed by S. Carver Davenport, and the evening’s narrator will be Gail E. Bowman, university chaplain.

Smallwood, a popular composer, pianist and arranger, is best known for his gospel hits, “The Center Of My Joy” and “I Love The Lord.” He and his group, Vision, have recorded chart-topping albums including “Rejoice,” “Adoration – Live in Atlanta,” and “Persuaded – Live in D.C.” Smallwood, a cum laude graduate of Howard University in Washington, D.C. with degrees in vocal performance and piano, recently obtained a Master’s degree from Howard University Divinity School. His music has been recorded by Whitney Houston, Yolanda Adams, Boyz II Men, Destiny’s Child, Karen Clark-Sheard, and many others. Smallwood has been inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

Nelson-McIntosh is a minister and psalmist selected to join Smallwood’s group, Vision. Her soaring voice was featured on “Adoration – Live in Atlanta” with the stirring song, “Thank You.” Her debut solo album, “My Heart Sings” has received acclaim in gospel circles. Griffin started singing in her father’s small church in rural Louisiana. She went on to study music and performance at Grambling University before pursuing a career in jazz, blues and gospel. Her debut album, “Purified,” led to a stint as a background singer for Patti LaBelle.

Lawless Memorial Chapel, a signature structure on the Gentilly campus, suffered only minor wind and water damage during Hurricane Katrina and in the subsequent London Avenue levee breach, even as the rest of the grounds were inundated with five to eight feet of water.

Dillard University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), has been a cornerstone of educational excellence since 1869. Dillard offers a quality, four-year, comprehensive undergraduate program. VisionQuest, Dillard’s vocation program, is funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., and is sponsoring Smallwood’s appearance at the concert.

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