

RALPH LAUREN

Polo Ralph Lauren Introduces New Collection That Builds Upon Its Historic Partnership With Morehouse and Spelman Colleges

March 15, 2022

Honoring the rich history and sartorial traditions of both historically Black colleges, the collection reflects the Company's ongoing commitment to expand the ways in which it portrays the American dream

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar. 15, 2022-- Ralph Lauren (NYSE:RL) today expanded its partnership with Morehouse College and Spelman College, unveiling a limited-edition collection inspired by the schools' rich heritage and esteemed traditions. The Polo Ralph Lauren Exclusively for Morehouse and Spelman Colleges Collection is a first-of-its kind collaboration for the Company. The collection seeks to honor the history of both schools and widen the aperture of Ralph Lauren's storytelling – including the nature of life at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), a story untold in depictions of Ralph Lauren's collegiate sensibility until today.

"This collection expresses the spirited history, deep sense of community and legacy of timeless dressing at historically Black colleges and universities," said Ralph Lauren, Executive Chairman and Chief Creative Officer of Ralph Lauren Corporation. "It's so much more than a portrayal of a collegiate design sensibility. It's about sharing a more complete and authentic portrait of American style and of the American dream – ensuring stories of Black life and experiences are embedded in the inspiration and aspiration of our brand."

Conceptualized and designed by Morehouse and Spelman alumni at Ralph Lauren, the collection also marks the first time the brand has produced a campaign with an all-Black cast including its photographer, creative directors, cinematographer and talent – predominantly comprising students, faculty and alumni at both institutions. The campaign was shot by internationally acclaimed fashion photographer Nadine Ijewere.

Celebrating the sartorial traditions and history of both schools with Ralph Lauren's signature tailoring, the collection expands the collegiate sensibility intrinsic to the brand's identity. The white patchwork eyelet and silk wrap dresses, which anchor the Spelman collection, symbolize the highly anticipated white attire ceremony, marking students' induction into the college. Similarly, the wool flannel blazer serves as an homage to the Morehouse blazer, a garment traditionally bestowed to students during their first days on campus.

The full collection – which includes outerwear, knits, tailored suits, dresses, footwear, accessories and more – references styles worn by Morehouse and Spelman students from the 1920s to 1950s, capturing the colleges' deep history and honoring their contributions to American style.

"Historically Black colleges and universities have uniquely been centers of both intellectual discourse and cultural influence for more than 150 years," said David A. Thomas, Ph.D., President of Morehouse College. "The Morehouse partnership with Ralph Lauren intelligently, creatively and boldly puts this intersection on full display, reflecting the breadth of impact we have had in driving societal transformation throughout our history."

"Spelman College's culture is a powerful combination of both community engagement and confident self-invention. This collection celebrates the inventiveness of individual style, when it intersects boldly with institutional tradition, such as the choices on display in the wearing of white attire," said Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D., President of Spelman College. "By sharing the early history of Spelman, as reflected in archival research, through clothing, the collection encourages conversations about the creative power of the Black experience and the ways in which a personal fashion aesthetic intersects with institutional values of solidarity and connection."

Through compelling footage and dynamic digital and in-store presentations, consumers can experience the story of this collection beyond the product. Ralph Lauren's accompanying film, "A Portrait of the American Dream," and commemorative yearbook detail the founding and historical significance of HBCUs through the lens of Morehouse and Spelman, demonstrating the use of style as an expression of aspiration, a form of self-empowerment and a tool of resistance. Both feature rare archival imagery from each college juxtaposed against collection imagery on the campuses' iconic landscapes, with commentary from the presidents of both colleges and several faculty, alumni and student cast members present throughout the campaign.

The film premieres on March 28, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. EDT on select Ralph Lauren social channels. The yearbook will be available digitally alongside the film on March 29, 2022, on [RalphLauren.com](https://ralphlauren.com). The collection will be available to global consumers on March 29, 2022, on [RalphLauren.com](https://ralphlauren.com), the Polo App, the Ralph Lauren App, Morehouse College and Spelman College Follett campus bookstores and in select Ralph Lauren stores while quantities last.

In 2020, Ralph Lauren [made a series of commitments](#) to take action on racial equity and reexamine how the Company portrays the American dream, mindful of its unique position in defining, interpreting and depicting Americana worldwide. Aligned with these commitments, the Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation [pledged](#) \$2 million to support scholarships for students at Morehouse College, Spelman College and 10 additional HBCUs through the United Negro College Fund in December 2021. The Company is also actively facilitating career pathways for Black talent by deepening internship, recruitment, mentorship and development programs. These efforts include reserving dedicated internship offers for HBCU students and expanding talent acquisition relationships with HBCUs beyond the traditional recruiting season.

ABOUT RALPH LAUREN CORPORATION

Ralph Lauren Corporation (NYSE:RL) is a global leader in the design, marketing and distribution of premium lifestyle products in five categories: apparel, footwear & accessories, home, fragrances and hospitality. For more than 50 years, Ralph Lauren has sought to inspire the dream of a better life through authenticity and timeless style. Its reputation and distinctive image have been consistently developed across an expanding number of products, brands and international markets. The Company's brand names—which include Ralph Lauren, Ralph Lauren Collection, Ralph Lauren Purple Label, Polo Ralph Lauren, Double RL, Lauren Ralph Lauren, Polo Ralph Lauren Children and Chaps, among others—constitute one of the world's most widely recognized families of consumer brands. For more information, go to <https://corporate.ralphlauren.com>.

ABOUT MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

Morehouse College is the only historically Black college dedicated to educating men. Founded in 1867, Morehouse is a private, liberal arts institution and the nation's top producer of Black men who go on to receive doctorates. The College is the top producer of Rhodes Scholars among HBCUs and was named to the list of U.S. institutions that produced the most Fulbright Scholars in 2019-2020. As the epicenter for thought leadership on civil rights, Morehouse is committed to helping the nation address the inequities caused by institutional racism, which has created social and economic disparities for people of African descent. Prominent Morehouse alumni include: Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General; Shelton "Spike" Lee, Academy Award-winning American filmmaker; Maynard H. Jackson, the first African American mayor of Atlanta; Jeh Johnson, former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security; Louis W. Sullivan, former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services; Bakari Sellers, attorney and CNN political analyst; Randall Woodfin, elected as the youngest mayor of Birmingham in 120 years; and U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock, Georgia's first Black U.S. senator from Georgia. For more information, visit: <https://morehouse.edu>.

ABOUT SPELMAN COLLEGE

Founded in 1881, Spelman College is a leading liberal arts college widely recognized as the global leader in the education of women of African descent. Located in Atlanta, the College's picturesque campus is home to 2,100 students. Spelman is the country's leading producer of Black women who complete Ph.D.s in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The College's status is confirmed by U.S. News & World Report, which ranked Spelman No. 54 among all liberal arts colleges, No. 24 for undergraduate teaching, No. 4 for social mobility among liberal arts colleges, and No. 1 for the 15th year among historically Black colleges and universities. The Wall Street Journal ranked the College No. 3, nationally, in terms of student satisfaction. Recent initiatives include a designation by the Department of Defense as a Center of Excellence for Minority Women in STEM, a Gender and Sexuality Studies Institute, the first endowed queer studies chair at an HBCU, and a program to increase the number of Black women Ph.D.s in economics. New majors have been added, including documentary filmmaking and photography, and collaborations have been established with MIT's Media Lab, the Broad Institute and the Army Research Lab for artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Outstanding alumnae include Children's Defense Fund founder Marian Wright Edelman, Walgreens Boots Alliance CEO Rosalind Brewer, political leader Stacey Abrams, former Acting Surgeon General and Spelman's first alumna president Audrey Forbes Manley, actress and producer Latanya Richardson Jackson, global bioinformatics geneticist Janina Jeff and authors Pearl Cleage and Tayari Jones. To learn more, visit <https://spelman.edu> and @spelmancollege on social media.

View source version on [businesswire.com](https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220315005378/en/): <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220315005378/en/>

Ralph Lauren Corporation Communications
Laurent L. Lawrence
RL-Press@ralphlauren.com

Morehouse College Communications
Jasmine Gurley
jasmine.gurley@morehouse.edu

Spelman College Communications
Jazmyn Burton
Jburton8@spelman.edu

Source: Ralph Lauren Corporation