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For immediate release:

## **Allen Toussaint, Marcia Ball to Play the Mondavi Center**

*February 8, 2008; Davis, California*—New Orleans music legend **Allen Toussaint**, a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, will play the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts** at **UC Davis** in a special concert also featuring acclaimed blues singer/pianist **Marcia Ball**. A renowned pianist, singer, songwriter, arranger, and record producer, Toussaint has worked with the **Rolling Stones**, **Bonnie Raitt**, the **Band**, **Paul Simon**, the **Meters**, **Joe Cocker**, **Dr. John**, **Elvis Costello**, and countless others in a career that has crossed genre boundaries with ease, produced several chart-topping hits, and defined the very heart of the Crescent City's rhythm and blues tradition.

The event will begin at 8 pm on March 7 in the Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall on the UC Davis campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at [MondaviArts.org](http://MondaviArts.org). Allen Toussaint will perform on piano and vocals without accompaniment; Marcia Ball will perform on piano and vocals accompanied by her four-piece band. The event is presented as part of the Mondavi Center's **American Heritage Series**.

Allen Toussaint will also participate in a free panel discussion entitled ***Flood, Culture, Loss, and Geology: The Impact of Hurricane Katrina***. The event, part of the Mondavi Center's **Forum@MC** series, will include **Jeffrey Mount**, UC Davis professor of Geology, and moderator **Patricia A. Turner**, Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies and professor of African American and African Studies and American Studies. The panel discussion will begin at 4 pm on March 6 in the Mondavi Center's Studio Theatre and is free and open to the public.

Allen Toussaint has been an integral part of the New Orleans music scene since the 1950s, when an opportunity to substitute for the legendary **Fats Domino** at a recording session led to a career as one of the most prolific and popular session musicians, producers, arrangers, and songwriters to spring from the Crescent City. Toussaint has penned hits including **Lee Dorsey's** "Working in the Coal Mine," **Herb Alpert's** "Whipped Cream," and **Glen Campbell's** "Southern Nights"; written arrangements for the **Band's** *Rock of Ages* and **Paul Simon's** *Kodachrome*; and produced hits including **Dr. John's** "Right Place, Wrong Time" and **Labelle's** "Lady Marmalade." He is also known as an outstanding pianist and a soulful vocalist who has released albums under his own name including *Life, Love, and Faith* (1972); *Southern Nights* (1975); *Connections* (1996); and *The River in Reverse*, a Grammy-nominated 2006 collaboration with **Elvis Costello**.

Born January 14, 1938, in New Orleans, Toussaint began playing piano at age seven, inspired by New Orleans legend **Professor Longhair**. He learned the Crescent City musical traditions playing with the "Dew Drop

Set,” a group of musicians who often played at the Dew Drop nightclub and who regularly visited Toussaint’s mother’s house to practice and have a meal. Early work as a session musician led to jobs with local record companies including Minit, where Toussaint wrote and produced hits for New Orleans rhythm and blues artists including **Ernie K-Doe**, the **Neville Brothers**, and **Irma Thomas**. Many of these songs went on to reach even bigger audiences when “covered” by the rock bands of the mid- to late-1960s, such as when **Benny Spellman**’s “Fortune Teller” was recorded by the Rolling Stones, the **Who**, and the **Hollies**, to name a few.

In the 1970s, Toussaint teamed up with **Marshall Sehorn** to form a record company known variously as Tou-Sea, Deesu, or Kansu, and set up the Sea-Saint recording studio in New Orleans. The decade found him releasing two of his own most popular albums, *Toussaint* (also known as *From a Whisper to a Scream*) and *Southern Nights*, as well as writing for and producing artists such as Dr. John, the **Wild Tchoupitoulas**, the **Meters**, and Labelle, for whom he produced the classic album *Nightbird* and the No. 1 hit single “Lady Marmalade.” His song “Southern Nights,” recorded by Glen Campbell, became a No. 1 hit, and his “What Do You Want the Girl to Do?” was covered by **Boz Scaggs**, **Lowell George**, and **Bonnie Raitt**.

As the 1970s gave way to the 1980s and 1990s, Toussaint’s activities tailed off, but he still found time to produce albums by artists including **Etta James**, **Albert King**, Elvis Costello, and **Joe Cocker**. His music found new audiences as the classic funk records of the 1970s were regularly sampled by rap and hip-hop artists, and the late 1990s found him returning to recording with the album *Connected*. In 1998, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Toussaint’s most recent recording, *The River in Reverse*, came about after Toussaint moved to New York City while his New Orleans home was being repaired in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and found himself renewing acquaintances with Elvis Costello. The resulting album, which finds Costello vocalizing on a set of Toussaint classics as well as new tunes by both artists, was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Pop Vocal Album.

Over the course of her three-decade career, Texas-born Marcia Ball has developed a hard-driving piano style steeped in zydeco, blues, and boogie-woogie. Through 12 acclaimed solo recordings, most of them for the Rounder and Alligator labels, and through decades of consistent touring, Ball has developed a large and dedicated following.

Her most recent CD, *Live Down The Road* received a Grammy nomination, the third of Ball’s career, and she remains a critical favorite. “Piano-pounding Marcia Ball plays masterful, red-hot tracks from the Texas-Louisiana border. Her voice can break your heart with a ballad or break your back with a rocker,” wrote the *Boston Sunday Herald*. She has won several prestigious awards, including a pair of W.C. Handy Blues Awards, for Contemporary Female Vocalist of the Year (1998) and Blues Album of the Year for *Presumed Innocent* (2002). At the 2007 Blues Music Awards, she was awarded the Pinetop Perkins Piano Player of the Year award for the third year in a row.

For her Mondavi Center concert, Ball will perform with bassist **Don Bennett**, guitarist **Mike Keller**, drummer **Corey Keller**, and saxophonist **Thad Scott**.

“In Allen Toussaint and Marcia Ball, we have two of the finest exponents of the New Orleans rhythm and blues piano tradition, and we’re proud to be presenting them as part of our American Heritage Series,” said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center’s executive director. “We look forward to what should be a rousing evening of music from the Crescent City.”

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**What: Allen Toussaint  
and Marcia Ball**

**When:** Friday, March 7 ▪ 8 pm  
**Where:** Jackson Hall  
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts  
University of California, Davis  
**Admission:** \$42/\$37/\$32 Adults • \$21/\$18.50/\$16 Students, Children  
**Tickets/Info:** 530.754.ARTS (2787)  
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)  
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>  
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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