Spelman College wins 7th annual Moguls in the Making entrepreneurial pitch competition

- Ally and Thurgood Marshall College Fund gathered 50 students to compete for over $200k in scholarships and prizes
- A team of students from Spelman College received first place for their pitch that explored the intersection of entrepreneurism and impact in Detroit through helping women-owned businesses grow
- Winning team from Spelman College will be featured on "The Jennifer Hudson Show" airing on Sept. 25

DETROIT, Sept. 15, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Spelman College students took top honors in the seventh annual **Moguls in the Making** entrepreneurial pitch competition, where 50 students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) developed innovative and impactful solutions to address economic mobility challenges in Detroit. The winning team will be featured on "The Jennifer Hudson Show" on Sept. 25 to speak about their Moguls in the Making experience and winning idea.

The Moguls in the Making competition, held Sept. 11-14 in Detroit, was hosted by Ally Financial in collaboration with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF). Since the program's inception in 2019, nearly 400 students have participated. To date, Ally has awarded nearly $1.5 million in scholarships and prizes through Moguls in the Making.

"Moguls in the Making provides invaluable early business experience for future leaders, offering students the opportunity to learn from experts and explore how different industries can make an impact," said Kathie Patterson, chief human resources and corporate citizenship officer, Ally. "At Ally, we're focused on creating brighter futures by intentionally addressing economic mobility challenges facing our communities."

Fifty students – 10 teams with five students each – toured Ally's hometown of Detroit to learn about the city's rich heritage, community and challenges. They were then assigned industries and asked to develop a concept to support economic mobility in Detroit, creating business plans to put those ideas into action. This year, in addition to learning experiences, students also explored how to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) into their processes responsibly, learning how AI will support the workforce of the future.

The Moguls in the Making program included motivational messages from executives and community leaders, workshops, fireside chats and mentor engagement. A mogul in his own right, actor, television personality and author Terrence J, shared his career journey and spoke about how grit and determination allowed him to follow his passions and build a name for himself in the entertainment industry.

On the final day, each team presented their business plan to a panel of judges who awarded prizes to the top three teams based on the pitch. Members of those top teams each received a scholarship for the 2025 school year and other prizes to support their education.

The 2025 top three teams and their pitch concepts were:

First Place: Spelman College, $20,000 scholarships for each student.
Their idea, Prospera, creates an ecosystem that builds up women-owned small businesses, increasing economic mobility in Detroit and beyond. Prospera is more than a Fintech platform; it's a partner in financial well-being.

- Aubria King, Junior, Biology
- Ca'Miyah King, Junior, Political Science
- Kennedy Washington, Junior, Sociology
- Madison Harris, Sophomore, Literature, Media and Writing
- Sydney Johnson, Sophomore, Economics

Second Place: Hampton University, $10,000 scholarships for each student.
Their idea, FuelU, addresses food insecurity through meal plans at community college campuses across the city of Detroit. FuelU lockers are temperature controlled and provide healthy, fresh, ready to go meals directly to students with AI powered technology.

- Arthur Green, Senior, Strategic Communications
- Kaleb Moore, Junior, Business Management
- Lynnette Smith, Sophomore, Finance
- Symonne Brooks, Senior, Marketing
- Trinity Polk, Senior, Journalism

Third Place: North Carolina A&T State University, $5,000 scholarships for each student.
Their idea, Detroit Capital Connect, is an AI-powered tool that supports economic mobility by helping small businesses identify grants, loans and funding opportunities while simplifying the application and submission process.

- Akevia Wilkerson, Sophomore, Psychology
- Bryce Ferebee, Senior, Supply Chain Management
- Dorian Jackson, Junior, Marketing & Sales
- Enioluwa Olabode, Sophomore, Computer Science
- Jakari McIver, Sophomore, Finance

All other students who competed received a$1,000 scholarship for their participation.

"The Thurgood Marshall College Fund is incredibly proud to extend our relationship with Ally for the seventh year," said DrHarry L. Williams, TMCF president & CEO. "Ally's investment in the innovation and entrepreneurial talent at HBCUs highlights its commitment to empowering students to improve their socioeconomic standing—benefiting not only the students but also their communities."

More than 460 students completed the application process for this year's competition. Those chosen to compete hail from Delaware State University, Florida A&M University, Hampton University, Howard University, Morgan State University, Norfolk State University, North Carolina A&T State University, North Carolina Central University, Prairie View A&M College and Spelman College.

Mentors and team coaches from the Detroit business community including Ally executives, past Moguls in the Making participants and HBCU alumni donated their time to work with students, providing valuable perspective throughout the competition.

Learn more about the program at **www.ally.com/moguls**.

Additional Moguls in the Making quotes for use:
Terrence J, actor, television personality and author
"As a graduate of an HBCU, I know the importance of opportunities like Moguls in the Making for young leaders. I could not pass up the chance to once again work with Ally to elevate students from all backgrounds and encourage them to pursue their dreams."

Natalie Brown, senior director of corporate citizenship at Ally
"As a proud HBCU alumna, the work we do with Moguls in the Making is deeply personal, investing in future leaders to create pathways to lasting success. By providing essential access and exposure for these talented students in a city like Detroit – which has a rich legacy of innovation and resilience – we're contributing to the economic mobility and future of the community by proving that when you empower students with the right tools, they can truly change the world."

Andrea Brimmer, chief marketing and public relations officer at Ally
"Moguls in the Making is full of rigorous learning and ideation, and these students once again impressed us with their energy and creativity for solving real-life challenges. After events like these, I come away feeling inspired by the impact this next generation will have in shaping the future of business and society. The city of Detroit is known for its entrepreneurial, creative spirit, and this year's students harnessed that passion, making me even more confident that when provided the opportunity, students like these have limitless potential to shape our future for the better."

About Ally Financial
Ally Financial Inc. (NYSE: ALLY) is a financial services company with the nation's largest all-digital bank and an industry-leading auto financing business, driven by a mission to "Do It Right" and be a relentless ally for customers and communities. The company serves customers with deposits and securities brokerage and investment advisory services as well as auto financing and insurance offerings. The company also includes a seasoned corporate finance business that offers capital for equity sponsors and middle-market companies. For more information, please visit www.ally.com.

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About the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF)
Established in 1987, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) is the nation's largest organization exclusively representing the Black college community. TMCF member schools include the publicly supported historically Black colleges and universities, predominantly Black institutions and historically Black community colleges, enrolling nearly 80% of all students attending Black colleges and universities. Through scholarships, capacity building and research initiatives, innovative programs and strategic partnerships, TMCF is a vital resource in the K-12 and higher education space. The organization is also the source of top employers seeking top talent for competitive internships and good jobs. TMCF is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable organization. For more information about TMCF, visit www.tmcf.org.

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