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**National Civil Rights Museum and Ford Motor Company Fund Announce Freedom's Sisters Exhibition and unveil Renamed Museum Theater**

*Freedom's Sisters Traveling Exhibition Honors 20 Extraordinary African American Women, Ford Motor Company Fund, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and Cincinnati Museum Center Partner with National Civil Rights Museum to present Groundbreaking Exhibition*

MEMPHIS, TN, February 01, 2009 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Freedom's Sisters, the most significant interactive, multimedia exhibition dedicated to African American women who fought for the equality and freedom for all Americans, opened in Memphis at the National Civil Rights Museum on Friday, January 30. A collaborative effort between the Cincinnati Museum Center, Ford Motor Company Fund and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), Freedom's Sisters honors 20 extraordinary African American women, from key 19th century historical figures to contemporary leaders, through their stories of courage and commitment.

The exhibition will continue through April 5, 2009. It then moves to Detroit as part of its three-year U.S. tour. Other Freedom's Sisters cities include Birmingham, Chicago, Dallas, Atlanta and Philadelphia.

"This exhibition, which is part of Ford's overall commitment to celebrating American heritage, brings riveting chapters of American history to life through the legacies of 20 outstanding African American women who helped shape civil rights in America," said Jim Vella, president, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services. "Ford is extremely proud to bring this exhibition to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, where it will be shared and celebrated by people of all ages and experiences."

As a special added attraction, a one-hour documentary on the lives and accomplishments of the women of Freedom's Sisters made its national debut during a January 29th pre-opening reception at the National Civil Rights Museum's recently renamed "Ford Motor Company Theatre". The re-naming honors Ford Motor Company Fund's one-million dollar contribution in 2007 to the museum. Ford's contribution supports the refurbishment of the museum's permanent exhibits, and the addition of new interactive and adaptive media technology, and increased museum flexibility in educational programming. Following its debut, the documentary will be shared with individuals and organizations throughout the U.S.

"Ford is pleased to play an important role in sustaining the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, his legacy and the civil rights movement," said Vella. "The National Civil Rights Museum fulfills this commitment through its historical collections and its dedication to teaching generations about the substantial contributions made by civil rights leaders and others who improved the lives of all Americans."

Throughout its nationwide tour, Freedom's Sisters will seek to encourage and motivate future leaders, particularly students, through a dialogue on the civil rights struggle organized around four themes: "Dare to Dream," "Inspire Lives," "Serve the Public," and "Look to the Future." Historical simulations and interactive displays will drive home messages and meanings central to each Freedom Sister's life.

"As a Freedom Sister, I am thrilled to witness how this extraordinary exhibit coincided with the historic election of Barack Obama, it's hard to realize the significance of this occasion," said Dr. Dorothy Height, chair and president of the National Council of Negro Women.

The interactive exhibit invites visitors to bear witness to some of the most important moments in our nation's history. Freedom's Sisters is expected to attract people of all ages, races, and backgrounds, whether they were a part of the civil rights movement themselves, or a student of the movement through stories passed down through family, friends and history books.

"SITES is pleased to bring Freedom's Sister's to the National Civil Rights Museum and other cities across the country," said

SITES Director Anna Cohn. "The work, vision and lives of these women are truly a cultural and historical touchstone for Americans of all ages and we are excited to share with thousands of others - many of them children - their inspiring and important stories."

"We are excited by Ford Motor Company's visionary leadership in providing support for the National Civil Rights Museum," said Beverly Robertson, president, National Civil Rights Museum. "Their gift helps us to showcase groundbreaking exhibits such as the Freedom's Sisters to preserve the history and legacy of those civil rights leaders that dedicated and sacrificed their lives for equality for future generations."

#### ABOUT FORD MOTOR COMPANY FUND AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services is committed to creating opportunities that promote corporate citizenship, philanthropy, volunteerism and cultural diversity for those who live in the communities where Ford operates. Celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2009 and made possible by funding from Ford Motor Company, Ford Motor Company Fund supports initiatives and institutions that foster innovative education, auto-related safety, and American heritage and legacy. National programs include Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies, which provides high school students with academically rigorous 21st century learning experiences, and Driving Skills for Life, a teen-focused auto safety initiative. The Ford Volunteer Corps, established in 2005, continues Ford's legacy of caring worldwide. Through the Volunteer Corps, Ford employees and retirees participate in a wide range of volunteer projects in their communities. For more information on programs made possible by Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services, visit [www.community.ford.com](http://www.community.ford.com).

#### ABOUT CINCINNATI MUSEUM CENTER

Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal is home to the Cincinnati History Museum, Duke Energy Children's Museum, the Museum of Natural History & Science, the Robert D. Lindner Family OMNIMAX Theater, and the Cincinnati Historical Society Library. It is a nationally recognized educational and research resource and one of the top cultural attractions in the Midwest. Cincinnati Museum Center serves more than one million visitors annually, reaching out to almost 200,000 young people through hands-on exhibits and programs. As a center for the community, more than 700 events are held in the building each year. Originally built in 1933 as the Union Terminal train station, the building is a national historic landmark and was renovated and reopened as Cincinnati Museum Center in 1990. For information, call (513) 287-7000 or 1-800-733-2077 or visit [www.cincymuseum.org](http://www.cincymuseum.org).

#### ABOUT SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERVICE (SITES)

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For more information, including exhibition descriptions and tour schedules, visit [www.sites.si.edu](http://www.sites.si.edu).

#### ABOUT THE NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM

The National Civil Rights Museum is located at the historic Lorraine Motel, site of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. The Museum opened in 1991 and chronicles the civil rights movement from 1619 to 2000 with historical exhibits, including Room 306, the hotel room where Dr. King stayed in April of 1968. The Museum operates as a non profit with an average of 200,000 visitors a year and serves as an educational, cultural and site of conscience for all visitors. Visit our website at [www.civilrightsmuseum.org](http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org) or call (901) 521-9699.