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FORD MOTOR COMPANY FUND DEBUTS *FREEDOM'S SISTERS* CIVIL RIGHTS EXHIBIT AT THE CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM AND HONORS LOCAL DETROIT HEROES

- *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 Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History to present groundbreaking exhibition
- *Freedom's Sisters* will honor local Detroit African American women at the media preview

DETROIT, Mich., April 24, 2009 — They were poets, activists, educators, and politicians, but not well known by news media. Still, they shaped much of the spirit and substance of civil rights in America, just as their mothers had done for decades. *Freedom's Sisters*, the most significant interactive, multimedia exhibition dedicated to African American women who fought for the equality and freedom of all Americans, opens in Detroit at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History on Saturday, April 25. 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 exceptional African American women, from key 19th century historical figures to contemporary leaders, through their stories of courage and commitment.

Covering more than 100 years of extraordinary work, *Freedom's Sisters*, which premiered in Cincinnati in February 2008, has traveled to venues in Sacramento, Calif. and Memphis, Tenn., provides a detailed overview of the path the Freedom's Sisters took during the Civil Rights Movement. The exhibition opens in Detroit on April 25, running through July 5, 2009 and then moves to Birmingham, Ala. as part of its three-year U.S. tour. Other cities the tour will include are 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. “*Freedom's Sisters* tells a story which must be told and we at Ford Motor Company Fund are committed to bring this exhibition to Detroit where it will be shared and celebrated by people of all ages and experiences.”

As a special added feature, *Freedom's Sisters* will honor several local prominent African American women who made a significant contribution to Detroit's history at a press event on Friday, April 24 at 9 a.m. at the Charles H. Wright Museum. This is the first time the exhibition tour has celebrated the achievements of African American women in a local market.

“Ford is pleased to play an important role in acknowledging Detroit area African American women whose contributions helped to build this great city,” Vella said. “We are excited to weave their stories of courage into the *Freedom's Sisters* exhibit debut at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.”

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.

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 Sisters* to the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History 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 creating such a historical exhibit for our nation’s children to see the great works of our female civil rights leaders,” said Juanita Moore, president and chief executive officer, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. “Their gift helps this nation to preserve the history and legacy of those civil rights leaders that dedicated and sacrificed their lives for equality for future generations.”

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For more information on the *Freedom’s Sisters* exhibition, visit www.civilrightsmuseum.org.

***Freedom’s Sisters* Exhibition Honorees**

Ella J. Baker	Constance Baker Motley	Shirley Chisholm
Mary Church Terrell	Septima Poinsette Clark	Kathleen Cleaver
Myrlie Evers-Williams	Fannie Lou Hamer	Dorothy Height
Charlayne Hunter-Gault	Barbara Jordan	Mary McLeod Bethune
Rosa Parks	Sonia Sanchez	Coretta Scott King
Betty Shabazz	Harriet Tubman	C. Delores Tucker
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	Ida B. Wells	

***Detroit Freedom’s Sisters* Honorees**

Delores Bennett	Catherine Blackwell	Barbara Cleage
Aretha Franklin	Geraldine Bledsoe Ford	Esther Gordy
Erma Henderson	Iami Humphrey	Rachel Keith
Violet T. Lewis	Josephine Love	Carmen N’Namdi
Dell Pryor	Annette Rainwater	Jessie Slaton
Judge Cynthia Diane Stephens	Dr. Cledie Taylor	Mother Waddles
Margaret Ward	Martha Jean “The Queen” Steinberg	

***Freedom’s Sisters* Exhibition National Committee of Honor**

Julian Bond
Roslyn Brock
Lonnie Bunch
Hon. Julia M. Carson

Hon. Donna Christian-Christensen
Dr. Johnetta B. Cole
Hazel Dukes
Elizabeth Eckford
Kevin Frazier
Ed Gordon
Alexis M. Herman
Cathy L. Hughes
Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr.
Dr. Mae C. Jemison
Hon. Eddie Bernice Johnson
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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.

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.

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.

ABOUT THE CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History provides learning opportunities, exhibitions, programs and events based on collections and research that explore the diverse history and culture of African Americans and their African origins. The Charles H. Wright Museum strives to be recognized as the institution of choice for exploring and presenting African American history and culture. The Museum is located at 315 E. Warren Avenue in Detroit, Mich.