



OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 10, 2014

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The 59th Annual Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner Update

We have gathered this morning to update the community as to the approaching Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner scheduled for May 4th, as well as Freedom Weekend beginning May 2nd and 3rd, here in the city of Detroit. These events are shaping up to be a most significant, socially engaging, and people uniting series of events for our region. The upcoming Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner has many opportunities for people to engage at many levels. We are pleased to have our honorees, Congressman John Dingell, Senator Carl Levin, and Rev. Dr. William Barber from North Carolina.

Today we are announcing two additional awards to be presented to Ms. Tonya Allen, the new President of the Skillman Foundation, who will receive the *Great Expectation Award* from the Detroit Branch NAACP. Tonya Allen serves as a most sensitive and engaged community leader in the area of foundations that are committed to the progress of the city of Detroit. As a young adult, she exemplifies both a professional demeanor and a sensitivity to the grassroots community.

We would also like to send out a very important call to both the youth and young adult community, ages 15-20, to join us for a special entertainment presentation at the Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner. This presentation will involve high energy and a unique opportunity for urban and suburban youth to come together in the spirit of racial and social harmony. We invite youth from

churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and schools both public and private, to contact the Detroit Branch NAACP to participate in this historic event.

We are most pleased to add to our ranks of public policy analysts, political and business leaders, our keynote speaker for the 2014 Dinner. Our Keynote Speaker is a well-known lawyer, civil rights leader, educator, author, constitutional expert, teacher, professor, and people-motivator. He is the Harvard Law School Jesse Climenko Professor of Law, and is the founding and Executive Director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice. He has made an international reputation by analyzing and explaining complex issues of law. He has worked to secure the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution for everyone, equally under the law. He is of course, Professor and Doctor Charles J. Ogletree of Harvard University. Dr. Ogletree is a recipient of countless awards, and has often been named by Ebony Magazine as one of the “100 Most Influential Black Americans”.

For such a time as this, understanding “**one man’s commitment...one nation’s promise**”, Dr. Ogletree is the right person for this challenge. Leading up to the Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner, the Freedom Institute will sponsor a Dr. Ron Walters National Town Hall, dealing with issues of Revitalizing Urban America; Ground Zero in Detroit. These meetings will be held at the Fellowship Chapel United Church of Christ Banquet and Conference Center, beginning Friday May 2nd and Saturday May 3rd. Among the events during Freedom Weekend will be:

Urban Economic Legislative Policy Summit: A Legislative Best Contracting Model
(Presented by the Urban Initiative Round Table: MI Legislative Black Caucus, Freedom Institute, Wayne State University, Detroit Branch NAACP, National Action Network, MI Black Chamber of Commerce)

The Business of Entertainment

Hollywood Comes to the Neighborhood: *Be a star in front of, and behind the camera*
(Youth & Young Adult Symposium)

Educational Panel and Luncheon: A Look at the Urban Educational System: Failures and Successes

Urban Mayor’s Panel: A National Perspective: Decay of Urban America

Among those special guests who will be a part of this weekend will be Shaun Robinson of Access Hollywood and Mr. Brian Smiley, one of our former ACT-SO students, who is now the manager of Home Entertainment and New Business Development for New Regency Productions at 20th Century Fox and Warner Brothers. Mr. Smiley worked very closely with paving the way for industry support for the motion picture *12 Years A Slave*, the movie of the year. Both Mr. Smiley and Shaun Robinson will participate in a special panel dealing with the Business of Entertainment during Freedom Weekend. We invite everyone to join us for these historic events. You may contact us at 313-871-2087 or go to our website at www.detroitnaacp.org or to the Freedom Institute website at www.freeinst.org.

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For more information on the Detroit Branch NAACP please call (313) 871-2087 or visit www.detroitnaacp.org.