



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

“A NEW ERA, THE SAME CAUSE...JUSTICE!” DETROIT BRANCH NAACP’S 62ND ANNUAL FIGHT FOR FREEDOM FUND DINNER

DETROIT -- One of the great treasures in the city of Detroit, lies in the historic annual event known as the **NAACP Fight for Freedom Fund Dinner**. There is no other event in the nation that brings together such a diversity of community activists, business, labor, corporate, faith-based, young and old, from every vocation and station in life, in the numbers that we find here in the city of Detroit. It continues to provide a source of pride, networking, fellowship, and the building of bridges across culture and community.

It is our pleasure to announce those special guests and awardees for the 2017 Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner. It is particularly significant at this very critical time in our nation’s history as we face challenges to national health care, civil and human rights, community policing/racial sensitivity, and public education, all at a cross road as it relates to quality and accountability. The issues are great. The NAACP, the nation’s oldest civil rights organization, continues to stand at the forefront of these issues. We remain committed to preserving freedom and dignity, not only for African Americans but other people of color often ostracized or overlooked by many, whether in the house of Congress or even at the White House.

Among the special award winners for 2017 will be the recipient of the **Ida B. Wells Barnett Freedom & Justice Award**, Ms. Joy Reid, host of AM Joy on MSNBC. Ms. Reid has demonstrated not only excellence as a journalist, but as one who speaks truth to power, clarifies confusion, spreads the gospel of news, does her homework before she appears on the air, and takes no prisoners regardless of party affiliation or philosophical situations. She is an author and former writer for the Miami Herald and the South Florida Times news outlets.

Receiving the **Mary Church Terrell Award for Freedom & Justice Award** will be former Acting U.S. Attorney General Sally C. Yates. As you know, Attorney General Yates stood tall and erect by refusing to defend a travel ban called for by President Trump, which she deemed as being unconstitutional and against the basic laws of our nation.

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She also was instrumental in the forced resignation of National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, due to his unreported discussions of U.S. Sanctions with the Russian Ambassador. This incident could possibly lead to a violation of the Logan Act, which prohibits private citizens from interfering in diplomatic disputes. She indicated in a letter to her colleagues and to the White House, *"I am responsible for ensuring that the positions we take in court remain consistent with this institution's solemn obligation to always seek justice and stand for what is right."* For this stand, she was fired from her post as acting Attorney General by the President. Now for her position, the people want to applaud her, for standing up and not succumbing to this overbearing assault on the constitution, caused by those in power, attempting to usurp true justice for all people.

Certainly, we are delighted to present one of two **Great Expectations Awards** to the newly elected Vice President of the Detroit Public Schools Board of Education, Ms. Angelique Peterson-Mayberry. Ms. Mayberry, who works with the Ford UAW division as an organizer, educator, has also worked with the Coalition for the Future of Detroit School Children in helping to formulate direction and recommendations for educational reform in the city of Detroit. She was the #1 vote getter in the recent election of new board members for the Detroit Board of Education. As a young woman in the city of Detroit, she continues to be an outspoken advocate both for workers' rights, educational quality, and youth leadership development.

The second **Great Expectations Award** will be presented to Mr. Jaren Johnson, President of Eastern Michigan University's Black Student Union, and to Mr. Darius Anthony, President of the college chapter of the Eastern Michigan University NAACP. These two young people have been instrumental in calling out and drawing attention to the racial harassment and environment at EMU, when others seem to ignore its reality. Those of us in the civil rights community sometimes believe that young people are not paying attention and are not prepared to carry the banner for freedom and justice in the future. The students at EMU have demonstrated not only from their marches, educational sit-ins, and their teach-ins, that they are attempting to broaden the thinking of students, faculty, administration, and the Eastern Michigan University community. They have stood tall in the midst of these most challenging situation. They continue to speak boldly for the dignity and respect of all students, and particularly African Americans who attend Eastern.

Finally, we are pleased to announce our keynote speaker. In looking for one who reflects the time that we are in, who has spoken boldly about all these issues, who continues to be a crystal clear voice regardless of race, station, or location, who has made a history of advocating for the rights of people regardless of their status in life, she has been their champion. She is an active consumer protection advocate, active in the financial oversight area of Congress, active in health, education, aging, and labor issues, and recipient of numerous awards and national acclaim. We are very pleased to have as our keynote speaker, even though, **"She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted,"** the senior senator from the great state of Massachusetts, the Honorable Elizabeth A. Warren. We will also have special tribute and celebration to women.

As this year has been marked by mobilization of millions of women across the nation and the world calling for justice and human dignity, there will be a special historic tribute made for the unique role women play in the acquiring of freedom and equality for all people. Our theme for this year's historic event is **"A New Era, The Same Cause...Justice!"** We believe that this line up of freedom fighters, advocates for justice, and keepers of the flame of hope, will serve as true inspiration for those of us in the city of Detroit and this region. The dinner will be held on Sunday April 23rd at 5:00 PM, at Cobo Convention Center. You may go to detroitnaacp.org or call (313) 871-2087 to secure you tickets and sponsorship ads for the hottest and most significant event of this type for our city.

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