

CLEVELAND HISTORY CENTER

of the WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For Immediate Release

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Weekend Celebration Salutes George L. Forbes, Esq. October 13-14, 2018 at WRHS Cleveland History Center

Cleveland, Ohio (April 30, 2018) - Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) salutes Clevelander George L. Forbes, Esq. with a weekend celebration October 13-14, 2018. In partnership with his daughters, Helen Forbes Fields, Mildred Forbes Beal, Lauren Forbes, and RLR III & Associates, WRHS invites the community to celebrate the rich African American heritage of Cleveland, and recognize the lifetime achievements and continuing contributions of George L. Forbes.

Born April 4, 1931, George Forbes was the youngest of eight children and grew up in the segregated South. In 1949, George came to Cleveland with his brother, Zeke. After serving in the military and graduating from Baldwin Wallace College, Mr. Forbes had a prolific career in politics. His career began after he was elected to Cleveland City Council representing Ward 27 in the Glenville area in 1963. He served on City Council during the terms of five mayors – Ralph Locher, Carl B. Stokes, Ralph Perk, Dennis Kucinich and George Voinovich. As such, his knowledge of city politics is unparalleled. The Cleveland Plain Dealer, in a 2007 article, named him among the most influential people in Cleveland. After semi-retiring from his law practice, Mr. Forbes served as president of the NAACP Cleveland Branch, receiving the NAACP's highest award for meritorious service in 2009.

Recently, Mr. Forbes entrusted WRHS with his records. The addition of these papers to WRHS's expansive archive of local and regional history creates a rare research opportunity for those interested in the role of African Americans in Cleveland politics, and shines a light on Mr. Forbes's relationship with the city and region.

"On behalf of my family and myself, it is an honor to be the subject of this undertaking. I am a willing and proud participant in contributing many of my personal and public effects to the archival catalog at the Western Reserve Historical Society and its African American Archives program," says George L. Forbes. *"It is my hope that the legacy of my works and dreams for the city of Cleveland, and the upliftment of Black people in particular, can be used as a catalyst for positive growth, in my own community and beyond. Each and every item that I have shared during this process is connected to a path of my journey. From the smallest note to that which may be considered monumental, all have special meaning and texture connected to a moment or idea of family and community, concepts that I have never taken lightly. Please join my family and me for the **WRHS George L. Forbes Weekend Celebration**. I look forward to seeing you and shaking your hand."*

The African American Archives program was established in 1970 to collect, preserve and make accessible the documents, photographs, memorabilia, art, and artifacts that pertain to African American life, history and culture in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. This extraordinary collection is vital to understanding the history and contributions of African Americans, and is used to develop school and youth programming and exhibitions. This is exemplified through WRHS's Youth Entrepreneurship Education continuum offered in collaboration with Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) and the Burton D. Morgan Foundation and two new permanent exhibits, *Carl and Louis Stokes Making History* and *Cleveland Starts Here®* sponsored by the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation.

The African American Archives highlight exemplary Clevelanders, and preserve vital pieces of history about entrepreneurs like Alonzo Wright and Garret Morgan, musician/activist Zelma Watson George, PhD, and activist/social worker Jane Edna Hunter, Esq. The archives tell the stories of personal experiences that embody the challenges, trials, victories, and impact of African Americans in Cleveland. It is because of these stories WRHS has seen a need for, and interest in, maintaining the ethnic history of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio.

"These collections are at the heart of the WRHS's community history program. WRHS is honored to steward the George L. Forbes Collection that will significantly enhance our collective understanding of Cleveland and northeast Ohio history during the 20th and 21st centuries. We thank you, Mr. Forbes, for entrusting WRHS with this collection that documents your life's work." says Kelly Falcone-Hall, WRHS President & CEO.

"The members of the WRHS African American Archives Auxiliary greatly appreciate this substantial addition made to the George L. Forbes archival collection by the Forbes family, and their willingness to lend their time, talent energy and other resources to continue fundraising for the Dr. Booker T. Tall Endowment Fund in support of the African American Archives," says Sherlynn Allen-Harris, Interim President of WRHS African American Archives Auxiliary.

The **George L. Forbes Weekend Celebration** continues the momentum to engage Cleveland's African American community. Event proceeds benefit the African American Archives and allow WRHS to enhance preservation and awareness of the African American experience in Cleveland.

WRHS invites the community to join in the celebration of the career and life of Mr. George L. Forbes. The celebration begins at the Cleveland History Center on **Saturday evening, October 13, 2018** with a **Salute to George L. Forbes, Esq.** Sponsorship opportunities are available. Individual tickets are \$150.

On **Sunday, October 14, 2018 – George L. Forbes Day | Community Celebration**, The Cleveland History Center opens its doors to the community for a day of celebration including a proclamation for Cleveland City Council, live entertainment, intergenerational activities, and a display celebrating the career and legacy of George L. Forbes, Esq. Doors open at noon with activities continuing until 5pm. More details on the events, committee, and partnership opportunities are available at wrhs.org.

In collaboration with community advocates, RLR III & Associates, and Cleveland leadership representing a host committee of 108 individuals and organizations, WRHS furthers its commitment to preserving and interpreting the African American experience in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. A full committee list is available at wrhs.org.

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About the Western Reserve Historical Society and Cleveland History Center

Founded in 1867 as an historic branch of the Cleveland Library Association on Public Square in downtown Cleveland, the Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) shares the dynamic stories of Northeast Ohio and beyond – stories of the people, the artifacts and the archives that are the provenance for our region.

Operating six sites throughout Northeast Ohio, WRHS presents exhibitions, programs and experiences that tell the story of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio through art, documents and artifacts from a variety of collections at its headquarters, the Cleveland History Center in University Circle. Through the use of its vast collections of family history, community history, entrepreneurship, and technological innovation, the Cleveland History Center provides a much-needed sense of place in today's mobile society. It is a base for learning about innovation that can be transferred into modern economic expansion.

Admission to the Cleveland History Center includes access to Cleveland Starts Here[®], two historic mansions, both on the National Register of Historic Places, the Crawford Auto-Aviation Museum (with support from The Frederick C. and Kathleen S. Crawford Fund of the Cleveland Foundation), Chisholm Halle Costume Wing, Research Library, Kidzibits Playzone, Community History & Art Galleries, and rides on the Euclid Beach Park Grand Carousel.

WRHS is a Smithsonian Affiliate (www.affiliations.si.edu) a national outreach program that develops collaborative partnerships with cultural organizations to enrich communities with Smithsonian resources. WRHS is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. Sponsorships, bequests, grants, admissions, and other funding are used by WRHS to preserve and enrich the region's artistic and cultural heritage. WRHS earned a top four-star rating from Charity Navigator, the nation's most-used independent evaluator of charities and nonprofits. Visit us at 10825 East Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44106, at www.wrhs.org or on social media @clestartshere.