

CLEVELAND HISTORY CENTER

of the WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For Immediate Release

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Western Reserve Historical Society Announces Expanded African American Heritage Program

New Exhibits & Public Events Scheduled Through 2019 at Cleveland History Center

CLEVELAND, OH (February, 2019) – Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) is the historical society for Cleveland and northeast Ohio, with six sites located in four counties of the region. Founded in 1867 as the trusted steward of our region's history, WRHS is one of the largest and most diversified historical societies in the country. WRHS creates spaces and inclusive experiences that invite guests to see themselves in the narrative of the American experience.

In 2017, WRHS opened two major, permanent exhibitions at the Cleveland History Center: ***Carl and Louis Stokes Making History*** and ***Cleveland Starts Here***[®] sponsored by the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation.

Using materials from WRHS's African American Archives and interviews with contemporaries, the stories of Carl and Louis Stokes and the legacy of their life's work welcome guests as they enter the Cleveland History Center. The exhibit experience is enhanced for young scholars with facilitated programming. Through unique hands-on, kinesthetic, and minds-on activities, students explore the struggle for voting rights, wrestle with gerrymandering, and consider the importance of their political voice.

Featuring nearly 900 items from WRHS's extensive library and museum collections, ***Cleveland Starts Here***[®] tells the story of the people of our city and region, from the 1790s to the present day. Highly participatory, contemporary and relevant to today, guests see themselves in the story. A number of stories follow along the Cleveland history narrative aligned with the African American experience. These stories serve as a portal that invites guests to take a deeper dive into this history by exploring the WRHS African American Archives and other exhibits throughout the Cleveland History Center. Additionally, guests are invited to follow a Cleveland Starts Here Discovery Guide that prompts self-discovery within the museum experience, learning about generations of Clevelanders who came before them and finding connections between their own lives and the people of the past.

With Cleveland Starts Here as the framework for the guest experience at the Cleveland History Center, the experiences of African Americans in Cleveland and northeast Ohio are highlighted throughout the year in a series of new exhibits, programs, and preservation initiatives at the Cleveland History Center, and throughout WRHS:

Exhibitions

- ***Cleveland Starts Here***[®], sponsored by the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation - From the first Cleveland map and early survey tools, to a lunar descent engine and LeBron James' championship shoes, Cleveland Starts Here[®] tells the stories of the triumphs and tragedies that define Cleveland. Images and items take guests through a journey from the first survey party in 1796 through today. Among them are stories of Black Joe, an African American who assisted Moses Cleaveland and his survey party on their journey in 1796; stories of Josiah Henson, Oberlin Rescuers and others involved in anti-slavery efforts; followed by stories of more contemporary African Americans who made an impact on the region and the nation like Garrett Morgan, Carl and Louis Stokes, George L. Forbes, Ruby Terry, Jesse Owens, Jim Brown, and LeBron James to name a few.
- ***Carl and Louis Stokes: Making History*** This permanent exhibit, opened November 2017, honors Mayor Carl B. Stokes and his brother, Congressman Louis Stokes, and is built as a continuation of their legacy of leadership, advocacy and action.
- ***Dr. E. Theophilus Caviness: Church, Community, Cleveland*** (opens January 21, 2019) – Visitors to the CHC will explore the life of one of Cleveland's most impactful community builders, Rev. Emmitt Theophilus Caviness. His move from Texas to Cleveland in 1961 brought him to the Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church in Cleveland's Glenville Community. In addition to his work in the religious community, Rev. Caviness has served on the Executive Board of the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, the Zoning Board of Appeals for the City of Cleveland, the Planning Board of the Glenville Area Council, the Sewer Board of Cleveland, and worked as the executive assistant to former mayor George V. Voinovich. Discover his role in the Civil Rights Movement, feel the power of his preaching and music, and learn about his dedication to family and community engagement.
- ***The Soul of Philanthropy Reframed and Exhibited*** (Opening September 6, 2019) – This traveling exhibit will open at the Cleveland History Center September 2019 in partnership with a collaboration of African American nonprofit, business, civic leaders and allies across Northeast Ohio. The exhibit showcases the impact of African American philanthropy through meaningful visual arts while promoting all levels of community and spotlighting the valuable good works of the social sector. WRHS is working closely with the collaborative team to develop a companion exhibit that celebrates the traditions of philanthropy among the local African American community

Events & Programs

- **Black History on Tap** February 16, 2019, 1:00pm to 4:00pm - Explore the rich history of Cleveland's African American community and learn about the impressive pioneers playing pivotal roles throughout Cleveland history. Celebrate their legacies with contemporary performances and an exclusive look at WRHS collections.
- **Youth Entrepreneurship Education** Program serves more than 10,000 schoolchildren in Greater Cleveland, including every 4, 5, and 6 grades from Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). The program inspires the entrepreneurial spirit in our youth using historical examples of African American innovators and entrepreneurs whose stories live on in WRHS's collections.

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About Cleveland History Center Programming

Each year over 65,000 visitors enjoy history-based exhibits and programming at one of the city's most unique locations. Cleveland History Center educators, interpreters and curators "inspire people to discover the American experience by exploring the tangible history of Northeast Ohio" through curriculum-based education offerings, signature events, Region 3 Ohio History Day competition and other educational programs such as History on Tap.

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.

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 has 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.

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