



For Immediate Release

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**INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER & MUSEUM
ANNOUNCES EXHIBITS & ARTIFACTS**

Lunch Counter and Original Seats Are Highlights of the Historic Site Where the Sit-In Movement Began

GREENSBORO, N.C., (Sept. 15, 2009) — On Feb. 1, 2010, the nation will mark the 50th anniversary of the sit-in movement with the grand opening of the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in Greensboro, N.C. In advance of its opening, the Museum today announced 14 exhibits that will be featured focusing on the international struggle for civil and human rights, as well as a range of artifacts from the civil rights era.

The centerpiece of the Museum will be the historic lunch counter and the original stools where four N.C. A & T freshmen (Ezell Blair Jr., Franklin McCain, David Richmond and Joseph McNeil) sat down in nonviolent protest on Feb. 1, 1960, and ignited the sit-in movement. The Museum is housed in the original 1929 F.W. Woolworth retail store in downtown Greensboro, N.C., which was saved from destruction by the Museum's co-founders, Melvin "Skip" Alston and Earl Jones.

The Museum's exhibit space will span two floors and cover 30,000 square feet. A blend of educational exhibits, period artifacts and state-of-the-art technology will be featured, taking visitors on a journey through the challenges African Americans faced in the struggle for equal rights. The Museum will also highlight key contributors in the civil rights movement and celebrate the impact of the sit-in movement on civil and human rights issues throughout the world.

"The Greensboro sit-ins were a galvanizing moment in the civil rights movement, and we have designed the Museum to create an authentic experience for visitors," said Amelia Parker, executive director of the International Civil Rights Center & Museum. "The original portion of the lunch counter and stools where the four students sat has never been moved from its original footprint, while the remaining section has been restored and returned to its 1960 location. The authentic backsplash, massive cash register, food service equipment, place settings, service utensils, signage and other elements remain to create a realistic 1960 lunch counter experience for Museum visitors."

Other highlights of the Museum's exhibits include:

- **All Men are Created Equal** - an introductory exhibit to help transition visitors from the 21st century to an era when racial injustice and "Jim Crow" laws permeated a segregated society
- **A Moment that Changed America** - a filmed reenactment of the discussion between the Greensboro Four on the night of Jan. 31, 1960, when the freshmen quartet decided to take action

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- **The Hall of Shame** - an exhibit exposing the violent and turbulent times that marked the transition from slavery to “Jim Crow” to civil rights activism
- **In Memoriam to Lives Lost** - a wall of remembrance for lives lost in the battle for civil rights
- **A Changed World** - an exhibit dedicated to the continuing journey and the evolving non-violent civil rights, equality and peace movements throughout the world

A complete list of the 14 opening exhibits can be found at www.sitinmovement.org/news.

In addition to the exhibits, the facility is a “collecting museum” featuring period artifacts that reflect some of the most notable names, places, events and achievements of the civil rights movement. On display will be such items as:

- A bus seat, circa 1950, signed by Rosa Parks
- An authentic wooden slave auction sign
- Green Book, a circa 1950 travel directive to identify “safe houses” and establishments that would service African Americans
- A medical bag used by Dr. George Evans, the first African-American physician allowed to practice medicine in what had been an all-white Greensboro hospital
- The official uniform once worn by Capt. Harvey Alexander, member of the first graduating class from the Tuskegee Air Corps
- A travel typewriter used by anti-segregationalist Ralph McGill, a Pulitzer Prize winning author and publisher of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The building has been meticulously restored and reflects many of the architectural details from the original F.W. Woolworth retail store including the terrazzo floors, intricate moldings and even the signature “Woolworth” gold lettering that graces the exterior of the building. The Museum, which encompasses a total of 43,000 square feet, was designed by the The Freelon Group. The Freelon Group was recently named as the architectural design firm for the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, which will be located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

The exhibits were designed by Eisterhold Associates Inc., a nationally-known firm based in Kansas City, Mo., that has designed some of the nation’s most recognized museums and landmarks devoted to civil rights and African-American history. Eisterhold’s work includes the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tenn.; The Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, Ala.; The Civil Rights Memorial Center in Montgomery, Ala.; and the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Mo.

For more information on the International Civil Rights Center & Museum and its grand opening schedule of events, visit www.sitinmovement.org/savethedate.

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