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ACLU-NC Launches 50th Anniversary History Exhibit in Greensboro

*Chronicling the ACLU's Work Defending Civil Liberties in
North Carolina since 1965, 10-Panel Exhibit Debuts At Civil
Rights Museum in Greensboro from January through March*

CONTACT: Mike Meno, ACLU of North Carolina, [919-834-3466](tel:919-834-3466) (office), [919-348-9623](tel:919-348-9623) (cell),
or mmeno@acluofnc.org

GREENSBORO – To commemorate the 50-year anniversary of its founding in Greensboro in 1965, the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina (ACLU-NC) is unveiling a 10-panel history exhibit, “ACLU of North Carolina: Fifty Years of Protecting Liberty,” which chronicles the nonprofit organization’s work defending civil liberties in North Carolina over the past half century.

The exhibit, which recounts the ACLU-NC’s work on eight key civil liberties issues – free speech, racial justice, voting rights, women’s rights, LGBT rights, privacy rights, criminal justice reform, and religious liberty – is opening today at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in Greensboro, which celebrates its fifth anniversary on Feb. 1. An opening reception for the exhibit is planned for 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, January 15.

“This exhibit provides the public with an opportunity to learn about the history of civil liberties in our state and the unique role the ACLU of North Carolina has played in many important struggles for individual rights over the last half century,” said Jennifer Rudinger, who has served as executive director of the ACLU-NC since May 2004. “Much has changed in North Carolina

over the last fifty years, but the core principle guiding the ACLU-NC has remained the same: If the rights of society's most vulnerable members are denied, everyone's rights are imperiled. Those who see this exhibit will hopefully walk away remembering that freedom can't protect itself, and that the ACLU of North Carolina, while controversial to some, has spent five decades working on the front lines to protect and advance civil liberties for all North Carolinians."

The ACLU of North Carolina was founded by a committed group of volunteers in Greensboro in 1965 to challenge North Carolina's "Speaker Ban," which prohibited so-called "radicals" from speaking at state universities; the ACLU-NC successfully challenged the law in court as a violation of the First Amendment. At the time, there were about 300 dues-paying ACLU members in the state. Fifty years later, the ACLU-NC boasts a full-time staff based in Raleigh and more than 12,000 members and supporters across the state. The organization has gone on to play a leading role in legal and advocacy campaigns to protect voting rights and free speech, fight for racial equality and women's rights, secure the freedom to marry for same-sex couples, reform North Carolina's criminal justice system, and defend many other civil liberties over the past 50 years.

The International Civil Rights Center and Museum, housed in the landmark former Woolworth's store where the Sit-In Movement began in 1960, has been established to promote understanding of the struggles for equality, social justice, and freedom in the United States and across the globe.

The exhibit will remain on display at the Museum until March 31. It will then go on display at the Levine Museum of the New South in Charlotte from April 4 through July 12, with other exhibit dates across the state to be announced in the near future. The exhibit is sponsored by the ACLU of North Carolina, the Duke Human Rights Center at the Franklin Humanities Institute, the Human Rights Archive at the Rubenstein Library, and the John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American History and Culture. The research for the exhibit was compiled by Amanda Hughett, and it was designed by Pam Chastain and Jim Jarvis.

The ACLU of North Carolina is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to preserving and expanding the guarantees of individual liberty found in the United States and North Carolina Constitutions and related federal and state civil rights laws. With more than 12,000 members and supporters throughout the state and an office located in Raleigh, the organization achieves its mission through advocacy, public education, community outreach, and when necessary, litigation. Visit acluofnc.org for more information.

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