

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Participants in Springfield's Civil Rights Movement Tell their Stories in Black History Month Exhibit

SPRINGFIELD – In honor of Black History Month, the new Museum of Springfield History will host *Freedom through Their Eyes: Fifty Years of Civil Rights Perspectives in Springfield*, an exhibition conceived and created by ninety 11th-grade students from the class of 2011 at the Springfield Renaissance School. The exhibit will be on view at the museum from February 2-28, 2010.

Freedom through Their Eyes will consist of video interviews with people who played an active role in the Civil Rights movement in Springfield. The interviews will be available for visitors to watch in the museum's History Theater. Photographs of the interview subjects will also be on view.

Among the interview subjects are Dr. Ruth B. Stewart-Loving who is considered to be the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" in Springfield. Stewart-Loving served as president of the local chapter of the NAACP from 1965-1966.

Charles V. Ryan, who was mayor of Springfield during the mid-'60s when the Civil Rights movement took hold of the city, will also be filmed. During Ryan's tenure, integration of the schools through busing generated heated debate.

Representative Ben Swan was also active in the local movement. His participation with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the NAACP included numerous Civil Rights demonstrations.

Broadcast journalist Durham Caldwell served as news director at local radio and television stations in the area for 30 years and covered many stories related to politics, elections, education, race relations and other issues.

Newly elected to the Springfield City Council, E. Henry Twiggs was active in the Civil Rights movement both at the national and local levels.

The student project is being conducted under the guidance of Marisa M. Vanasse, M.Ed., teacher of 11th Grade U.S. History II and AP U.S. History at the Springfield Renaissance School, an Expeditionary Learning School.

The Museum of Springfield History is located on the Quadrangle at 21 Edwards Street in downtown Springfield. Free parking is available in the Edwards Street parking lots. Hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is \$12.50 for adults, \$9 for seniors and college students, \$6.50 for children 3-17, and free for children under three and museum members. **Springfield residents are free with proof of address.** The fee provides admission to all four Springfield Museums and the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden.

For information, call 413-263-6800 or visit www.springfieldmuseums.org.