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NEWS Release

Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum is Awarded NPS Grant

Morgan State University's Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum (LCJM) has been awarded an African American Civil Rights Grant of \$49,828.00 from the National Park Service (NPS) for its project, "1320 Eutaw Place: Lillie Carroll Jackson's Home for Freedom."

The grant will be used to support an oral history project to help preserve the heritage of LCJM focusing on historical events that took place during the time of Lillie Carroll Jackson's occupancy of 1320 Eutaw Place, with a special emphasis on those events that either gained national attention or affected the nation, such as the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Information gained from the oral histories will be used to inform the museum's application to be included on the NPS' National REGISTER Listing.

The NPS awarded 39 grants in more than 20 states totaling \$7.5 million to preserve sites and stories associated with the civil rights movement and the African American experience. Among the other grantees are the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama and Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The LCJM grant, the university's first from the NPS, will involve multiple departments of the university including the College of Liberal Arts' Screenwriting and Animation (SWAN) program, led by Keith Mehlinger, and will engage students from the Graduate School's History; Museum Studies and Historical Preservation; and African American Studies programs.

"I thought it was important to engage students from related disciplines. The workforce is very competitive, so it is vital that the university takes the lead in giving our students an advantage with paid opportunities for building their resumes and at the same time helps them to meet their everyday needs," reflected Iris Leigh Barnes, the museum's curator, who conceived and authored the grant proposal.

In addition to departments within the university as partners, the Lillie May Carroll Jackson Charter School (LMCJCS) is serving as a community partner. Working closely with the Principal of the school, Damia Thomas, the project will engage a core group of eighth grade students for a semester-long oral history curriculum that will be developed by the project team. Part of the mission of the LMCJCS is to create an expeditionary learning community for Baltimore City middle school girls, grades 5 – 8. Their core belief is that changing girls' lives changes the world. Principal members of the team include Iris Leigh Barnes as Project Director; Charles Chavis Jr, as Oral History Program Coordinator, Samantha Claybon as Museum Assistant, Robert Morrow, Ph.D., as Oral History Trainer, and Kyle Yearwood as



Media Technical Assistant. MSU students interested in working on this or other projects with the museum should e-mail the curator at iris.barnes@morgan.edu.

A four-story row home, the newly restored and modernized museum is located in Baltimore's Bolton Hill Historic District and at the crossroads of the Marble Hill community. The Marble Hill Community is located in the Historic Old West Baltimore Neighborhood of Upton and is important as one of Baltimore's earliest African American middle class communities where such leaders as Harry S. Cummings, Sr., the first African American Baltimore City Councilman and John Murphy, Sr., founder of the Afro-American newspaper resided. The home is also part of the Baltimore National Heritage Area Pennsylvania Avenue Trail. Initially the museum was opened in 1978 by members of the Jackson-Mitchell family, led by Ms. Jackson's oldest daughter, Virginia Jackson Kiah. The museum was acquired by Morgan State University in 1996 and has undergone a rehabilitation and upgrade process until its recent reopening last year in June.

The museum is comprised of two period rooms and six themed galleries. Included among the exhibits are paintings, letters, photographs, and historic documents related to Baltimore's leadership in the Civil Rights Movement. An ADA accessible feature is a modern elevator that opens to a glass floor creatively designed to maintain the architectural feature of the light well.

Another of the museum's new and/or enhanced features is a separate garage structure converted into a Resource Center for scholars of all levels. The museum is a digital-friendly environment with technological upgrades; an elevator; and rehabilitated structural and architectural components.

LCJM Background

Lillie Carroll Jackson served as president of the Baltimore Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1935 to 1970. During her tenure as president she worked closely with iconic figures of the Civil Rights Movement, many of whom had strong Baltimore roots, such as Justice Thurgood Marshall (litigator for the *Brown v. Board* landmark case and first African American Supreme Court Justice), attorney Charles Hamilton Houston (the mastermind behind *Brown v. Board*), NAACP executive secretary Walter White (long-standing executive secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—NAACP), Carl J. Murphy (editor of the preeminent regional African American newspaper, the *Afro American*); her son-in-law, Clarence M. Mitchell Jr., known as the "Lion in the Lobby" and the "101st Senator" who ushered in the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Clarence Mitchell worked closely with US Presidents from Roosevelt to Carter and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom; and Clarence Mitchell Jr's wife and Mrs. Jackson's daughter, Juanita Jackson Mitchell, who was the first African American woman to practice law in Maryland; among others.



The Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum is one of two museums owned and operated by Morgan; the other is the James E. Lewis Museum of Art located within the Murphy Fine Arts Center, where Mr. Gabriel Tenabe serves as the Director of the Office of Museums.

Public admission to the LCJM is on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 12:00 to 3:00 pm, or by appointment, free of charge. The museum is available for group tours, school groups, and as a venue for private events. The museum is planning a series of public programs with themes related to America's struggle for Civil Rights and addressed in the galleries. For more information about the museum or to plan a visit, e-mail LCJMMuseum@morgan.edu or call (443) 885-3895.

Morgan State University, founded in 1867, is a Carnegie-classified Doctoral Research Institution offering more than 70 academic programs leading to bachelor's degrees as well as programs at the master's and doctoral levels. As Maryland's Public Urban Research University, Morgan serves a multiethnic and multiracial student body and seeks to ensure that the doors of higher education are opened as wide as possible to as many as possible. More information about the university is available at www.morgan.edu.