



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

By Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony

DETROIT BRANCH NAACP 69TH ANNUAL FIGHT FOR FREEDOM FUND DINNER SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024 PRESERVING SWEET LIBERTY, DEFEATING BITTER TYRANNY!

DETROIT – The great philosopher and writer Ralph Waldo Emerson left us a prolific paradigm when he said, *“Democracy is not a spectator sport. It is a participatory event. If we don’t participate in it, it ceases to be a democracy.”* This is why the Detroit Branch NAACP continues to call upon all of us to participate in the preservation of our liberty and the protection of our freedom. The 69th Annual Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, May 19, at Huntington Place. As we face critical decisions related to policies and programs concerning health care, the right to vote, economic access and developments, international crises of war and division, a rise in hate crimes, as well as tensions in colleges and universities across the nation, all of us must participate in the great cause of equality and liberty for all.

We are pleased to announce the NAACP’s commitment to always speak truth to power and to advocate justice and peace for those often overlooked and many times are neglected. Our special honorees for 2024 reflect a very diverse assembly of those whose lives and work reflect the true mission and vision of the NAACP. Among the special honorees for our Great Expectations Award is Spain Middle School for winning first place in their division at the State Regional Competition for Robotics, which culminated in Maumee, Ohio. We will also present to Renaissance High School for first place in the U.S. Chess Federation National High School Championship U800 Division, which concluded in Washington, D.C., where more than 407 students and 67 teams in their division competed for first place. Detroit continues to produce champions. We are excited about Black Tech Saturdays, an organization that brings together investors, founders, and technology to create a special place and space for African American innovation, creativity, and excellence. They too will receive a Great Expectations Award.

This year’s Ida B. Wells Freedom & Justice Award will be presented to Attorney Khalilah V. Spencer. Attorney Spencer is a partner at Honigman Law Firm, serves on the Executive Board of the Detroit Branch NAACP, the Executive Committee of the Michigan State Conference NAACP, and is President of Promote the Vote. She is dedicated to informing, mobilizing, and supporting organizations and individuals whose task is to make sure every Michigander has the right and access to the voting booth. Nationally, we will present to Rev. Dr. Frederick D. Haynes, III, Senior Pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church, civil rights icon and activist, prolific preacher, and lecturer our William Monroe Trotter Freedom & Justice Award. Dr. Haynes has been unparalleled in his articulation for peace and justice, and a bearer of the cause of freedom all across our nation.

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We are pleased to award to one who is most deserving as she has announced her retirement after this term is completed, our own Senator Debbie Stabenow the very special Presidential Award. Senator Stabenow serves as the Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, and has been a stalworth in her support of Detroit and Michigan in the cause of justice and equity across our nation. Her life's work has been reflective of one who is truly dedicated to the lifting up of people regardless of race or background. It is our unique privilege and pleasure to announce that our Keynote Speaker for this historic event will be none other than the 46th President of the United States, the Honorable Joseph R. Biden. President Biden comes at a critical time in our nation's history. We face tremendous international challenges coupled with domestic and local issues that seek to divide us. However it is our belief that if we work together as a people that we can resolve these issues for the benefit of all Americans. We will also present to President Biden the James Weldon Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award for a life of dedicated service to the American people.

Our Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner will be preceded by Freedom Weekend in which we partner with the Freedom Institute for Economic, Social Justice, and People Empowerment. Freedom Weekend is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14 through Saturday, May 18. Freedom Weekend will be held at Fellowship Chapel United Church of Christ and the Wayne County Community College District Northwest Campus. It will consists of Health/Run/Wellness Day, Seniors Care Day, Youth Career Summit, a special Labor Leaders Luncheon on May 17, featuring the first African American President of the Communications Workers of America, Claude Cummings. All laborers and people who believe in workers' rights are invited to attend this very special gathering.

For more information and to secure your tickets or tables for the Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner, please contact us at (313) 871-2087 or go to detroitnaacp.org. One may also go to the Freedom Institute website at freeinst.org. We invite everyone to join with us on the Red Carpet on Sunday, May 19, just prior to the beginning of the dinner.

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