



2016 *Living Legends Awards*

MAAH's 2016 Living Legends Gala Salutes Distinguished Leaders

NATIONAL MUSEUM FOUNDING DIRECTOR LONNIE BUNCH, FORMER US ATTORNEY

WAYNE BUDD, AND HISTORIC AFRICAN MEETING HOUSE HONORED

Boston, MA: The Museum of African American History, Boston and Nantucket, will pay tribute to Former United States Attorney and Associate Attorney General for the United States **Wayne Budd**, and to Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture Founding Director **Lonnie Bunch** at the annual Living Legends Gala at the Four Seasons Hotel Boston on Sunday, December 4, 2016 at 4:30pm. Each year, the Living Legends gala recognizes outstanding leadership that upholds the legacy of 18th and 19th century black patriots and their colleagues who distinguished themselves on behalf of freedom and justice.

This year, we also celebrate the opening of the national museum on the mall in Washington, DC and the 210th birthday of the historic **African Meeting House** on Beacon Hill, one of the most important National Historic Landmarks in the United States. The Museum's Executive Director **Marita Rivero** will reflect on the historical legacy of the Meeting House, and Gala Co-chairs **Benaree Pratt Wiley** and **Fletcher H. Wiley** will present the William Lloyd Garrison Silver Cup to Mr. Budd and Mr. Bunch. A musical tribute will be offered by New England Conservatory musicians, featuring pianist **Bert Seager** and vocalist **Nedelka Prescod** performing Seager's original composition, "Praise." New to the 2016 gala is an after party from 6:45 – 9pm with music by the **Frank Wilkins Ensemble** with vocalists Prescod and **Valerie Stephens**, spoken word artist **Timothy Hall**, and fashions by **Iam Kreyol**.

Past Living Legends include such national and regional champions as Harry Belafonte, Adelaide Cromwell, Ossie Davis, Earl Graves, Hon. Edward Kennedy, Hon. Thomas M. Menino, Glendora McIlwain Putnam, Bill Russell, and Cicely Tyson, as well as Benaree and Fletcher Wiley. Thomas M. Menino, Glendora McIlwain Putnam, Bill Russell, and Cicely Tyson, as well as Benaree and Fletcher Wiley.

"At this year's gala, we salute the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the newest museum of the Smithsonian Institute," said Rivero, "and pay tribute to Lonnie Bunch, a central visionary in establishing this preeminent museum devoted to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture. We also honor one of Massachusetts' most accomplished sons, a highly regarded legal and business leader, and a man with deep community commitments. He is, in spirit, a true descendent of the early activists who gathered at the African Meeting House. At the

close of our museum's 49th year, we also celebrate the heart of our collections, the African Meeting House on Beacon Hill. Two hundred and ten years ago on December 6, the historic building became home to an activist community whose struggle for justice and freedom began in the 1700s and continued beyond the official abolition of slavery."

Wayne Budd served through two presidential administrations as Associate Attorney General of the United States appointed to the position by President George H.W. Bush in 1992, and a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission appointed to by President Bill Clinton. As former United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, he has been recognized for his efforts in combating street crime, drugs, and gang violence. Budd has represented numerous entities in significant litigation and business matters, one being Blue/Cross Blue Shield. Currently, Budd is senior counsel to the firm Goodwin-Procter. As a highly regarded legal and business leader with deep community commitments, Budd can be considered "one of Massachusetts most accomplished sons" said Marita Rivero, Executive Director of the Museum of African American History. Through their work, Lonnie Bunch and Wayne Budd carry out the messages early activists, who previously gathered at the African Meeting House.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture opened in September of 2016. This momentous occasion would not have been possible without the exemplary leadership of Founding Director Lonnie Bunch. Bunch has held several Smithsonian positions in the past, served on multiple museum advisory boards, is an acclaimed author of an award winning book, and has taught at both American University and George Washington University in Washington D.C. Bunch was recently featured on Ebony Magazine's list of its 100 most influential African Americans, and was named one of the most influential museum professionals of the 20th century by the American Association of Museums.

Standing majestically on the north slope of Beacon Hill, the African Meeting House was built in 1806 in what once was the heart of Boston's free black community. It served as a Baptist church, a school, and a vital meeting place in the 1800s, then as a synagogue in the 1900s. As Faneuil Hall was a beacon of independence in the 18th century, the African Meeting House was a beacon of freedom in the 19th century. Frederick Douglass was among abolitionist giants and dedicated citizens who spoke here, sought to educate themselves, build businesses and financial independence, and free those still enslaved in other states. The Meeting House was a site of many key historical moments, one being an anti-slavery speech given in 1860 by Frederick Douglass. We celebrate the African Meeting House as a Living Legend during its anniversary week for embodying the spirit of freedom and justice of the African American community.

"Therefore, we especially treasure the African Meeting House for its embodiment of how they built bridges across race and class," said Rivero, "to bring about profound changes that would resonate from America's past into the present and future."

MAAH Mission: The Museum of African American History is dedicated to preserving, conserving and accurately interpreting the contributions of African Americans in New England from the colonial period through the 19th century in our two locations in Boston and Nantucket. Visit us at <http://maah.org/>.

#####

Press contact: Lynn DuVal Luse
617.725.0022, ext. 12 | ldluse@maah.org