



Museum of African American History

For immediate release: February 1, 2012

MAAH CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY IN BOSTON AND NANTUCKET:

CONVERSATION WITH REV. MICHAEL HAYNES, POETS, MUSICIANS, AUTHORS, FAMILY WORKSHOPS, GUIDED TOURS OF NEWLY RESTORED AFRICAN MEETING HOUSE AND BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL®

Boston, MA — The Museum of African American History (MAAH), Boston and Nantucket, launches a year-long commemoration of the African Meeting House on Beacon Hill with multiple opportunities to experience the nation's first anti-slavery church, recently reopened after a multi-million dollar historic restoration. During Black History Month and throughout the year, the Museum showcases unique exhibits, moving performances, enlightening guest speakers, interactive workshops, and fun family events at its Boston and Nantucket National Historic Landmarks. In addition, guided tours of the Black Heritage Trail® in Boston and hourly tours of the African Meeting House are led by Rangers from the National Park Service, Boston African American National Historic Site.

On **Wednesday, February 8**, the Museum presents **A Profile In Color: A Conversation with the Honorable Reverend Michael E. Haynes** beginning with a networking reception at 6pm, followed by the program at 7pm, 46 Joy Street on Boston's Beacon Hill. The Museum's Executive Director, Beverly Morgan-Welch will conduct the interview with Rev. Haynes, who will provide insight into his life growing up in Boston, his 40-year ministry at the historic Twelfth Baptist Church, his friendship with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and his public service as a state representative.

Reverend Haynes, born of immigrant parents and a former sportswriter, joined Twelfth Baptist Church's ministerial staff in 1951, along with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., while both were Divinity students in Boston. One of this region's most esteemed pastors, Rev. Haynes has been honored over the years for significant contributions in Boston political and civic matters. He served as pastor of Twelfth Baptist from 1964 – 2004, as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives for three terms, and on many boards, including the Museum of African American History. Rev. Haynes is featured in **Don West's Portraits of Purpose: A Tribute to Leadership Boston, 1980 – 2012**, on display at the Museum of African American History in Boston through March 2012.

The Twelfth Baptist Church was formed in 1843 when 46 members from the First Independent Baptist Church at the African Meeting House formed a new congregation on Beacon Hill. The congregation still gathering at the Meeting House underwent several changes over the 19th century and birthed additional church bodies that still exist today, including People's Baptist Church and Charles Street AME Church. In 1904, the Meeting House became the religious home of Congregation Libovitz and remained a synagogue for nearly 70 years. The Museum of African American History purchased the African Meeting House in 1972 and secured its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1974.

"Pastors at the African Meeting House established the tradition of activism and civic engagement. Rev. Haynes is the embodiment of that service," said Morgan-Welch. "**Profiles in Color** was developed as a continuing

program of the Museum, where the honored and accomplished provide personal accounts, inspiring stories, and understanding of their journey and achievements over the course of their life. “One of the things I have loved most about these conversations is that our guests share things that are rarely found in newspaper articles, correspondence, or biographies,” Morgan-Welch added. “I attended Smith College with Dr. King’s daughter, Yolanda, so I am delighted to have this opportunity to gain some new insights from Rev. Haynes about the early history of the King family, here, in Boston.”

The Museum has featured conversations with such luminaries as Yolanda King, actor and activist; Bill Pinkney, *Amistad* captain and first person to solo circumnavigate the globe in modern times; Charles Ogletree, Jesse Climenko Professor of Law at Harvard University; the Honorable Ayanna Pressley, Boston City Councillor; Derrick Jackson, the *Boston Globe*’s award-winning Op-Ed columnist; Lydia Diamond, author of the play *Stick Fly*; and the Honorable Deval Patrick, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The African Meeting House was constructed, primarily by free black artisans, and opened in 1806. Considered the black Faneuil Hall, this three-story brick building served as a Baptist church, school, and vital meeting place in the 1800s, then as a synagogue in the 20th century, and now a museum. In addition to being a place of worship, the African Meeting House hosted historic meetings, accommodated unforgettable lectures, echoed with the voices of school children, and rallied for the recruitment of brave Civil War regiments.

Nantucket, MA — On **Sunday, February 19, from 2 to 4pm**, at the African Meeting House on Nantucket, the Museum hosts **An Afternoon of Jazz and Poetry featuring Regie Gibson, renowned poet, songwriter, author, and educator accompanied by musician Paul Connors**. This program marks the finale for the Sixth Annual *One Book, One Island*, the week-long event designed to foster the importance of life-long learning and provide multiple opportunities for cultural enrichment in the Nantucket community during quieter winter months.

The African Meeting House, built on Nantucket in the early 1820’s, is steeped in maritime history. It is the Island’s most powerful reminder of its thriving 19th-century black seafaring community. Constructed on land first developed by Seneca Boston and his wife, Thankful Micah, they were the parents of Captain Absalom Boston, a founding trustee of the church. Erected by the African Baptist Society, the building was called the African School and Church. With a coved ceiling, the small post-and-beam, one-story building is 900 square feet and hosted public gatherings for the antislavery and equal school rights movements as well as cultural and civic events during the 19th century. It is the only surviving public building on the Island constructed and occupied by the black community.

MAAH BOSTON EVENTS

Tours of newly restored African Meeting House Boston • Daily (except Sundays)

The historic restoration has made the African Meeting House on Beacon Hill accessible for all and returned the National Historic Landmark to its 1855 appearance, with elegantly curved pews and pulpit, period wainscoting and wall finishes, cast-iron posts and golden chandelier. National Park Service Ranger-led tours allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Maria Stewart and all the abolitionist leaders who helped bring an end to slavery in this country. Tours begin every hour on the hour, 11am – 3pm. Location: MAAH Boston, 46 Joy Street, Beacon Hill.

February 8, 6pm • A Profile In Color: A Conversation with the Honorable Reverend Michael E. Haynes
Networking reception at 6pm and interview at 7pm. Location MAAH Boston, 46 Joy Street, Beacon Hill

February 23, 7pm • Professor Sydney Nathans on *To Free a Family: The Journey of Mary Walker*
Professor Nathans, author, historian, and one-time fellow of the DuBois Institute at Harvard University, will share insights about his new book. Beverly Morgan-Welch, executive director of the Museum of African American

History, will introduce the guest speaker and offer some context for the book about Mary Walker and her experience in Cambridge in the 1850s. Co-sponsored by the Cambridge Center for Adult Education, Museum of African American History, and the DuBois Institute. Location: Cambridge Center for Adult Education, 42 Brattle Street, Cambridge.

Feb 25, 1pm • “Portraits of Purpose” Family Workshop at MAAH

Meet community leaders featured in noted photographer Don West’s *Portraits of Purpose* exhibit. Find out what kind of leader you are/will be, and create your own portrait. Location: MAAH Boston, 46 Joy Street, Beacon Hill, Boston.

MAAH NANTUCKET EVENT

February 19, 2 – 4pm • Nantucket’s 6th Annual One Book, One Island Program Finale: “Jazz People.”

An afternoon of jazz and poetry featuring poet Regie Gibson and Musician Paul Connors. Location: MAAH Nantucket/African Meeting House (29 York Street, Five Corners).

NOTE: Additional Nantucket events listed at maah.org.

For more information about the Museum of African American History, Boston and Nantucket historic sites and Black Heritage Trails®, education programs, special events, tours, hours and admissions, visit maah.org or call 617.725.0022, x222 in Boston and (508) 228-9833 in Nantucket.

#####

Press contact:
Lynn DuVal Luse
617.725.0022 (ext. 219)