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**C-SPAN to Air Recollections of Civil Rights Pioneers
Recorded for the National Museum of African American History and Culture
*Programs to Air Monthly Beginning April 2***

The intimate, personal stories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 60s will be presented for the first time on television in a series of programs airing on C-SPAN3 beginning **Tuesday, April 2 at 8:00 p.m.** with civil rights icon Rev. Joseph Lowery.

The oral histories were conducted by the Southern Oral History Program in the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on behalf of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) and the Library of Congress. The oral history project, created by an act of Congress in 2009, is a joint effort of the museum and the Library of Congress.

The first two oral histories on C-SPAN, Rev. Lowery and Freeman Hrabowski, will be introduced by NMAAHC director, Lonnie Bunch, who is joined by curator Elaine Nichols to add background and context to the stories. Additional oral histories will be announced at a later date.

"It is in the Nation's interest to undertake a project to collect oral histories of individuals from the Civil Rights Movement so future generations will be able to learn of their struggle and sacrifice through primary, eyewitness material," reads the Civil Rights History Project Act. "A coordinated Federal project would also focus attention on the effort undertaken by various public and private entities to collect and interpret articles in all formats relating to the Civil Rights Movement, and serve as a model for future projects undertaken in museums, libraries, and universities throughout the Nation."

The series will begin with the riveting recollections of Rev. Joseph Lowery, who along with Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and served as its president for 20 years, from 1977 to 1997. Rev. Lowery discusses his participation

in bus protests in Mobile, Ala. and describes riding on a bus that took “the most dangerous and volatile route” routinely patrolled by the Ku Klux Klan. Lowery recalls a meeting of the movement’s leaders that had to be adjourned because the Rev. Ralph Abernathy’s home and office had been fire bombed. Later in the program he describes how the Klan interrupted a mass meeting and how he and King hid for their lives in a hotel.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture was established by an Act of Congress in 2003 making it the 19th museum of the Smithsonian Institution. Scheduled for completion in 2015, it will be built on the National Mall on Washington, DC on a five-acre tract adjacent to the Washington Monument. Currently, during the construction phase, the museum is producing publications, hosting public programs and building collections. It is presenting exhibitions at other museums across the country and at its own gallery at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. An array of interactive programs and educational resources is available on the museum’s web site nmaahc.si.edu.

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