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NEWS RELEASE

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Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years Opens January 15

Free Admission Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Portland, OR – January 5, 2018 – On January 15, the [Oregon Black Pioneers](#), an organization dedicated to the preservation of Oregon's African American heritage, unveils its fourth exhibition at the Oregon Historical Society in downtown Portland. In celebration of the opening, admission will be free for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday. Museum hours are 10am – 5pm on Monday, January 15.

On view through June 24, [Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years](#) is a groundbreaking exhibit that details the courage, struggle, and progress of Oregon's

Black residents during the 1960s and 1970s and the reverberation of those issues today. This interactive display traces the ways that discrimination practices affected Oregon's Black community and spurred the Civil Rights Movement in Oregon.

MEDIA PREVIEW:

Please join us for a private exhibit tour with exhibit co-leaders Gwen Carr and Kim Moreland on **Wednesday, January 10 at 10am**. Email rachel.randles@ohs.org if you plan to attend.

PRESS PHOTOS:

High resolution photos and captions available via <http://bit.ly/2CTJcns>.

“This exhibit addresses the challenges facing Oregon's African American community during the 1960s and 70s and highlights the events, people, and organizations that made up the Civil Rights Movement during that era. It seeks to educate and engage visitors of all ages and backgrounds and challenge them to reflect on the current racial environment and make choices for positive change today,” said Gwen Carr, Exhibit Co-Leader.

Through their exhibitions, the Oregon Black Pioneers are working to educate individuals about the essential role that African Americans played in building the social, cultural, and economic base of Oregon.

“Our partnership with the Oregon Black Pioneers began in 2011, and since then OHS has been proud to host three exhibitions and many programs on the history of Oregon’s Black community spanning from 1788 through 1950,” said OHS Executive Director Kerry Tymchuk. “*Racing to Change* continues this important partnership, sharing stories that are incredibly relevant today.”

Racing to Change showcases an exciting period in Oregon and national history—while the 1960s and 1970s were filled with cultural and social upheaval, conflict, and change, it was also an era of celebration, experimentation, and achievement for African Americans. Through the Civil Rights Movement, young people made their voices heard, and were propelled to be catalysts for change within their communities. This exhibition also shares how established, vibrant Black communities held together in the face of public works funded demolition of homes and businesses, disruptive school integration measures, and other challenges.

A variety of community programs focusing on themes raised in the exhibition will provide multiple opportunities to explore its rich content. These programs will include community dialogues between 60s and 70s activists and current activists, a program highlighting the campus activists’ movement on various college campuses in Oregon, school tours, a free family day, and history talks by scholars and community elders. More information about these programs can be found at www.ohs.org/racingtochange.

"We hope that visitors to this exhibit will be inspired by the efforts of national and local civil rights activists and ordinary people who sacrificed their time, talent, and sometimes their lives for socioeconomic change. Most of all, we hope to encourage visitors, through their own personal capacity, to contribute to the fight for justice, equity, and inclusion in their respective communities," said Kim Moreland, Exhibit Co-Leader.

Racing to Change: Oregon’s Civil Rights Years is on view from January 15 through June 24, 2018 at the Oregon Historical Society (1200 SW Park Avenue, Portland). The museum is open seven days a week, Monday – Saturday from 10am – 5pm and Sunday from 12pm – 5pm. Admission is \$11, and discounts are available for students, seniors, and youth. Admission is free for OHS members and Multnomah County residents.

About the Oregon Black Pioneers

The state's premier Black heritage organization, the Oregon Black Pioneers, is dedicated to illuminating African Americans' contributions to Oregon's history through research, publications, exhibits, and community outreach. The organization's newest exhibition, *Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years*, directly builds on three highly successful collaborations with the Oregon Historical Society and reflects the all-volunteer organization's increasing capacity to create meaningful opportunities for community dialogue and learning.

About the Oregon Historical Society

For more than a century, the Oregon Historical Society has served as the state's collective memory, preserving a vast collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, manuscript materials, books, films, and oral histories. Our research library, museum, digital platforms & website (www.ohs.org), educational programming, and historical journal make Oregon's history open and accessible to all. We exist because history is powerful, and because a history as deep and rich as Oregon's cannot be contained within a single story or point of view.