



January 5, 2012

Beloved Friends and Family,

It is with great pleasure that I ask you to join the National Civil Rights Museum and me in congratulating Susan L. Taylor. After nearly four decades—three of which were at the helm—Susan left *Essence Magazine* in 2007 to lead the National CARES Mentoring Movement, a volunteer-driven organization of African American men and women who are dedicated to securing our country's most vulnerable and precious young people. In just five years and under Susan's leadership, CARES, now located in nearly 60 cities, has recruited and placed more than 160,000 African American mentors with children who need little more than a caring, stable and wise voice to help guide them across the often difficult terrain they call their lives.

In recognition of all she has done—and all she continues to do—the National Civil Rights Museum, located at the Lorraine Motel where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated, bestowed upon Susan the 2011 Freedom Award for Activism. In so doing, they said that the National CARES Mentoring Movement “speaks to the legacy left for all of us by Dr. King, who was an advocate for all people, but especially our young people.” The Museum, named by *USA Today* as one of America's Top Ten Treasures, has welcomed more than 3 million visitors since they first opened twenty years ago.

The Freedom Award has been bestowed upon the most inspiring leaders of our time since the Museum's opening in 1991. For their contribution to philanthropy, humanitarian work and social justice, past honorees have included President Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, James Farmer, Thurgood Marshall, The Dalai Lama, Diane Nash, Marian Wright Edelman, Bono, Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Oprah Winfrey, Ruby Dee, Sidney Poitier, Harry Belafonte, B. B. King, Stevie Wonder, President Lech Walesa, Myrlie Evers Williams and Elie Weisel among others. In November of 2011, in recognition of their twentieth anniversary, their honoree was my friend, my colleague, my mentor, Susan L. Taylor.

The breathtaking ceremony was held in Memphis, TN before 2,000 invited guests. Now we can all join in the wonderment of that magical night, as the affair will be airing in some 62 markets on PBS stations.

I have attached the schedule sent to us by the Museum so that you can either watch the program when it airs in your city or else set your DVRs accordingly. For more information about either the scheduling or the Museum itself, please visit www.civilrightsmuseum.org.

For now, please allow me to personally thank you for supporting Susan's life-changing and life-affirming vision for our children. And please join me in saluting a woman who is more than a mentor. She is, without exaggeration, our national treasure. Congratulations Susan!

Proudly,

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Vice-President for Communications
National CARES Mentoring Movement

Recruiting Mentors To Save A Generation