Contact:
Barbara Golden, Communications Manager
904-669-8142 (cell)
BGolden@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

Florida's Historic Coast® Recognizes 60th Anniversary of Civil Rights Act

St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and the Beaches announce important events celebrating Black History

St. Augustine, Fla. (May 1, 2024) – In June 1964, while Congress was in a stalemate debating the Civil Rights Act, attention turned southward as St. Augustine became the epicenter of the fight for equal rights for all Americans. The nation's oldest city made national news as peaceful activists faced violent opposition, including an incident later dubbed The Splash Heard Round the World, that produced images so haunting that Congress outlawed segregation the next day.

In celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act, Florida's Historic Coast announces a series of events highlighting the triumphant and courageous journey of Black Americans in the St. Augustine area.

Visit St. Augustine recently launched the St. Augustine Black History App. It is free to download on Apple and Google and integrates history with exploration, guiding visitors to culturally significant locations while supplying related historical information.

On June 5, the Cultural Arts Center at the St. Augustine Beach Hotel will open a permanent exhibit commemorating Black History on St. Augustine Beach, including the 1964 wade-in protests. Just a bit south, the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department is hosting a historic beach walk beginning at Frank Butler Park East on June 12, focused on the beach's namesake, influential Black businessman Frank Butler, and his place in Civil Rights history.

The Lincolnville Museum & Cultural Center (LMCC) will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Civic Rights Act and the efforts of local activists with an updated Civil Rights Exhibit, opening on June 11, and free Guided Civil Rights Tours on June 11, 18, and 25. The tour will visit significant locations in historic St. Augustine. The LMCC's annual Juneteenth Heritage Luncheon on June 15 features award-winning saxophonist Marcus Click, a conversation with Civil Rights activists from 1964, and a historic prelude to Excelsior High School's 100th Anniversary.

Civil Rights activist, author, and former journalist Charles Cobb will speak at St. Paul AME Church's morning worship service on June 16 and then join the LMCC at a reception celebrating the 100th anniversary of Excelsior High School, the first public Black high school in St. Johns County. On June 25,

the Museum welcomes nationally acclaimed sculptor Dana King for an exhibit celebrating her work creating public monuments of Black Bodies in Bronze.

On June 18, 1964, 16 Rabbis were arrested after they came to protest in St. Augustine after receiving a request for help from Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The St. Augustine Jewish Historical Society commemorates this act of unity with a presentation on June 18.

The St. Augustine Music Festival announces the return of its annual Juneteenth Recognition on June 19. The event will feature the Marcus Roberts Trio performing a fusion of New Orleans meets Harlem, with a special tribute to the 100th anniversary of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue."

The ACCORD Museum & Freedom Trail is celebrating the passing of the Civil Rights Act with three signature events. The Film Festival and Book Signing on July 1 offers documentary screenings and meet with seven authors, who will sell and sign their works. On July 2, ride the Freedom Trail Trolley Tour with renowned historian David Nola. The 9th Annual ACCORD Museum & Freedom Trail Luncheon on July 2 welcomes speakers Dr. Cynthia Mitchell Clark and Crystal Hayling, daughter of activist Dr. Robert B. Hayling.

Fort Mose Historic State Park is America's first free Black settlement and was the destination for African Americans traveling south in the 18th century precursor to the Underground Railroad. Experience its Battle of Bloody Mose event on June 22, where volunteers re-enact the fierce surprise attack launched by the Fort Mose Black militia, Spanish soldiers, and Yamasee warriors to reclaim the fort from the sieging British and Scottish invaders.

To make experiencing this remarkable chapter in American history, Florida's Historic Coast is has curated some great spring and summer lodging deals.

Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, Florida's Historic Coast includes historic St. Augustine, the outstanding golf and seaside elegance of Ponte Vedra, the rural beauty of Hastings, Elkton, St. Johns, and 42 miles of pristine Atlantic beaches. Visitor Information Centers are located at 10 Castillo Drive, St. Augustine; 200 Solana Rd. Suite B, Ponte Vedra Beach: and at the St. Johns County Beach Pier Park, 350 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine Beach. For advance travel information, call 1.800.653.2489 or go to the Visitors and Convention Bureau website at www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com. Check us out on social media Instagram @FloridasHistoricCoast; @ViajaStAugustine, Facebook.com/OfficialStAugustine, and Facebook.com/ViajaStAugustine and Twitter @FlHistoricCoast

# # #