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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BCRI RESPONDS TO DAMAGED CIVIL RIGHTS MARKER

The Institute Appeals to City for Increased Security in Civil Rights District

BIRMINGHAM, AL (August 6, 2021) – Since opening in 1992, The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) has served as the preeminent organization for civil rights inspiration, education, and advocacy. The Board of Directors and Staff are deeply committed to the historical and fiduciary responsibility that has been entrusted in our care as a sacred duty to safeguard civil rights history for subsequent generations.

An Alabama state historical marker named for Bishop Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., one of Birmingham's greatest civil rights leaders, was intentionally damaged by an unknown perpetrator sometime in the past week. Any attack against our community spaces is seen as an affront. With the support of Alabama Power, BCRI has made a commitment to work with the Alabama Historical Commission Preservation Office to replace and reinstall the marker.

Clinton Woods, Birmingham City Councilor representing District 1 and grandson of Bishop Woods has stated "I have a great appreciation for DeJuana Thompson of the BCRI. She has shown tremendous leadership and played a significant role in helping my family thru a difficult moment. From the moment she became aware of the issue, she and her team have worked to ensure the State of Alabama historical marker is replaced as quickly as possible."

A civil rights activist, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, and longtime president of the Birmingham chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Bishop Woods distinguished himself as a leader during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s when he co-founded the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) in 1956 along with his brother, the Rev. Abraham L. Woods, Jr. and Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth. Bishop marched with the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1963 and overcame violent racism on a frequent basis in the 1960s.

The mission of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is to promote a comprehensive understanding for the significance of the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham. This mission extends to our work preserving the civil rights legacy both tangible and in spirit. Given the light of recent events, we recommend an increase in security and surveillance protecting historical markers throughout the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. While there are several suspicions for the cause and culprit of the destruction, we will not stand for such intentional damage. The inequity of security for these sacred signs and artifacts is disparaging and a safety solution is required to heal our community. We welcome a conversation with local elected officials, Birmingham corporate and nonprofit partners and the greater community to discuss an equitable resolution for ensuring the preservation and safety within of our Civil Rights District and greater communities.

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About BCRI: *The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is a cultural and educational research center that promotes a comprehensive understanding for the significance of The Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham. For more than 28 years, we have enlightened each generation about civil and human rights. A part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, we stand strong as the cornerstone of the civil rights story, a living memorial with an ongoing mission.*

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