

#JOINTHERACE

JULY 2022

520 16th Street North
Birmingham, Alabama 35203

WEEKLY GIVEAWAYS · NASCAR STOCK CAR · A GEE'S BEND QUILT · INTERACTIVE FEATURES · STEM SPORTING SATURDAYS FOR KIDS · GAMING LOUNGE · SPORTS ARCHIVES & MEMORABILIA · UNIQUE PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES · CELEBRITY VISITS

RACE TO FREEDOM



AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SPORTS & THE MARATHON FOR PROGRESS
A BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE SPECIAL EXHIBIT



BIRMINGHAM
CIVIL RIGHTS
INSTITUTE



Microsoft



HONDA



The World Games
2022 BIRMINGHAM, USA





Media Contact:
Gina Mallisham, Marketing Manager
205.328.9696 x211
gmallisham@bcri.org

520 Sixteenth Street North
Birmingham, Alabama 35203
1.866.328.9696
www.bcri.org

RACE TO FREEDOM: AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SPORTS & THE MARATHON FOR PROGRESS

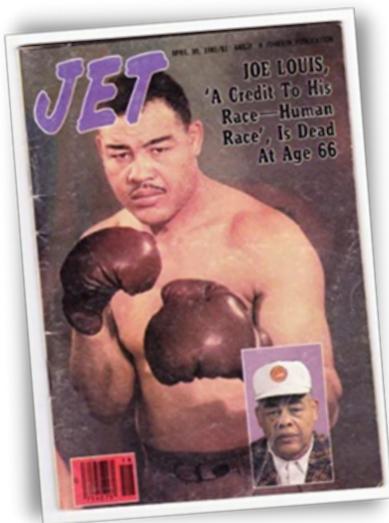
BCRI to Open a Special Exhibit in Conjunction with The World Games

BIRMINGHAM (June 27, 2022) – The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI), in partnership with The Alabama Sports Hall of Fame, NASCAR, Honda, Southern Custom Exhibits, Microsoft and The Southern Center for Broadening Participation in STEM, is pleased to announce the opening of a special exhibit on July 7, 2022 in conjunction with The World Games. *Race to Freedom: African Americans in Sports & The Marathon for Progress* will be an interactive display bringing into focus the powerful symbol of the wide-ranging challenges and triumphs in the nation's history of race and racism - sports.

The exhibit will take visitors through an observation of the space within society where African Americans have engaged in inventive ways to incite change and advocate for equality. The narrative and full-sensory experience will encourage visitors to consider the harrowing intersection of racism in sports and sports as conduit for progress. The points of reflection, or marks on the track of progress, include Segregation, Discrimination and Stereotypes, Activism and Change.

Adorned with a real BCRI branded NASCAR stock car that will be on display at the Institute as part of the presentation, this special exhibit is expected to bring thousands of visitors to learn more about the struggle for equality that Black athletes have faced for centuries. *Race to Freedom* will include weekly giveaways, a quilt crafted by Theresa McGhee Johnson, interactive features, unique photo opportunities with celebrities, sports archives and memorabilia. Featured objects and narrative pay tribute to athletes and athletic organizations tied to Alabama, including but not limited to: Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, Alice Coachman Davis, the Birmingham Black Barons, the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame, NASCAR, and others. Throughout, visitors will face statistical data related to racism and sports before exiting with their batons to continue the race for equality.

Microsoft and The Southern Center for Broadening Participation in STEM will be onsite presenting STEAM Sporting Saturdays for kids. This special addition will feature a gaming lounge in support of these activities commemorating The World games that attracts elementary, middle and high school students to enhance and enrich STEM experiences. Our aim is to increase STEM literacy enabling students to learn more deeply and think critically in science, mathematics, engineering, arts and technology (STEM).



The exhibit brand was designed by Brandan “BMike” Odums, a New Orleans-based visual artist who, through exhibitions, public programs, and public art works, is engaged in a transnational dialogue about the intersection of art and resistance. From film to murals to installations, Odums’ work depicts historical figures, contemporary creatives and everyday people and encapsulates the political fervor of a generation of Black American activists.

Our hope is that this spatial and special experience introduces people to deeper concepts in African American history and culture; and they see a clear alignment between their visit and the mission of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

To stay updated on the many great programs and exhibitions forthcoming at the Institute, visit bcri.org to sign up for our e-newsletter; and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter - @bhamcivilrights.

ABOUT BCRI

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is a cultural and educational research center that promotes a comprehensive understanding for the significance of civil rights developments in Birmingham. BCRI reaches more than 150,000 individuals each year through award-winning programs and services.

We have been enlightening each generation about civil and human rights by exploring our common past and working together in the present to build a better future for nearly three decades. We're committed to preserving the Birmingham civil rights story. BCRI creates programs and exhibits that encourage cultural awareness and champions civil and human rights by facilitating opportunities for courageous dialogue and deep understanding.

Race to Freedom + Full Gallery Experience

Mon – Sat 10am-5pm

\$25 Adults

\$23 Seniors, Veterans & Students (with ID)

\$10 Children (grades 3 and below)

FREE for BCRI Members

Race to Freedom Exhibit Only

Mon-Fri 5pm-8pm

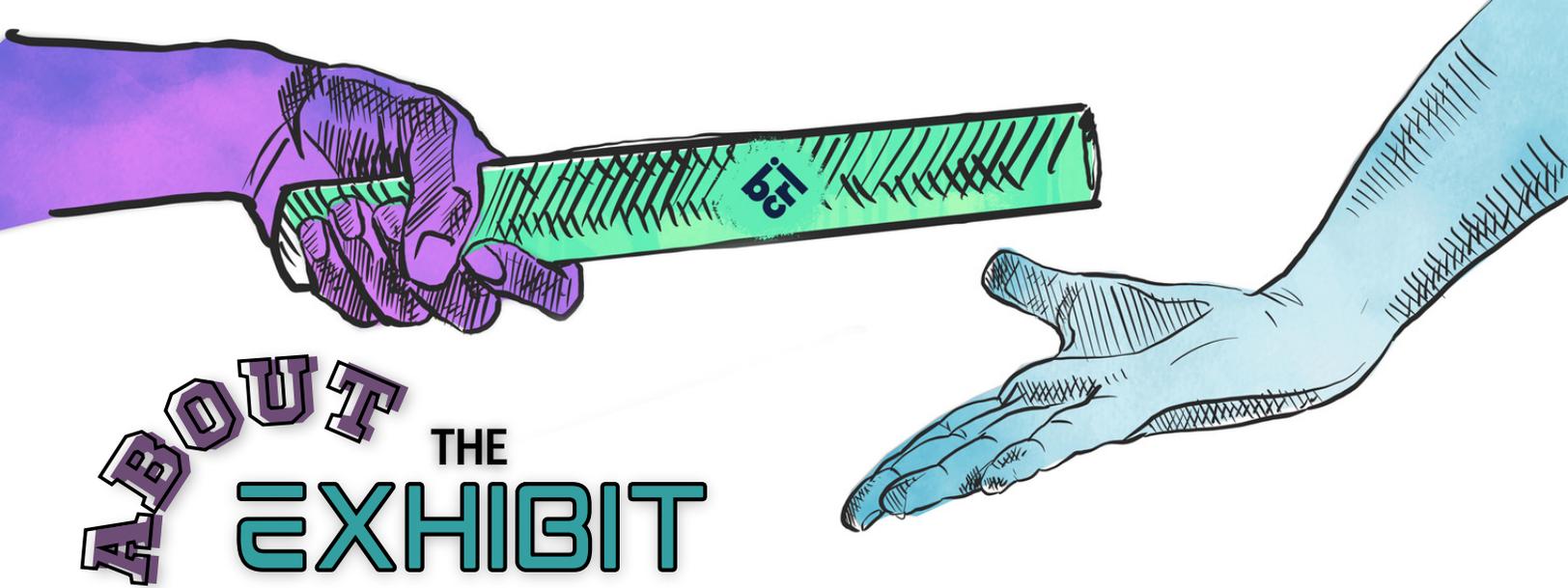
\$10 Adults

\$5 Children, Seniors, Veterans & Students (with ID)

FREE for BCRI Members

Gallery access ends 30 minutes before closure.

Purchase tickets at bcri.org!



Sports -- a space within society where African Americans have been recruited more than others -- is a powerful symbol of the wide-ranging challenges and triumphs in the nation's history of race and racism.

Just as calculations and scores communicate where each competitor stands in relation to one another in sports, this exhibit, which emphasizes the period of Jim Crow to the modern era, showcases how racism has influenced sports, as well as African American political, social and economic outcomes and statistics in the broader world. It will also highlight the inventive ways African Americans engaged sports as a means to incite change and advocate for equality. Therefore, the narrative and full-sensory experience encourages visitors to consider the harrowing intersection of racism in sports and sports as conduit for progress. The points of reflection, or marks on the track of progress, include [Segregation](#), [Discrimination and Stereotypes](#), [Activism](#) and [Change](#).

The [Segregation](#) portion of the exhibit tells the story of organizations and individual athletes and how they responded to apartheid practices in sports. Institutions such as the Negro Baseball Leagues speak to African American business acumen and athletic excellence even in the face of Jim Crow. Similarly, Historically Black Colleges and Universities nurtured college-turned-professional athletic talents when most other schools refused. The [Discrimination and Stereotypes](#) segment explores how various sports denied African American participation, while many upheld and perpetuated racial stereotypes even when allowing non-white athletes to compete. [Activism](#) presents the legacy of athletes who used their platforms as public figures to champion civil and human rights causes. The final section, [Change](#), deals with sports as both a unique sphere in which African Americans have attained record-breaking success, and as an avenue for people of all walks of life to gain access to greater opportunity.

Featured objects and narrative pay tribute to athletes and athletic organizations tied to Alabama, including but not limited to: Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, Alice Coachman Davis, the Birmingham Black Barons, the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame, NASCAR, and others. Throughout, visitors will face statistical data related to racism and sports before exiting with their batons to continue the race for equality. Our hope is that this spatial and special experience introduces people to deeper concepts in African American history and culture; and they see a clear alignment between their visit and the mission of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

THE CREATORS

DR. KIMBERLY BROWN PELLUM BCRI CURATOR-IN-RESIDENCE

With a PhD in United States history from Howard University, Kimberly Brown Pellum specializes in the history of women's images, southern culture and the Black Freedom Struggle. Her contributions to publicly accessible history include programming and narrative work at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, The National Park Service, and GOOGLE's Arts & Culture series. Committed to getting audiences excited about history, she has contributed to a number of volumes, as well as authored her own books including *Black Beauties: African American Pageant Queens in the Segregated South*. Currently, she serves as program coordinator for the Smithsonian's Africatown Slave Wrecks Project and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute as Curator in Residence.



WAYNE COLEMAN BCRI HEAD OF ARCHIVES

Wayne Coleman is Head of the Archives Department at BCRI which collects, houses, and makes accessible records and documents relating to events that occurred during the civil rights struggle of the 1950's and 1960's in the city of Birmingham and the United States; he makes all processed archival materials available to the general public and facilitates all research requests.



DR. SAMANTHA ELLIOTT BRIGGS VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Samantha Elliott Briggs is the Vice President of Education for the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. She comes to BCRI with nearly 30 years of experience in education as an urban school teacher, university professor, curriculum writer, grant writer, external evaluator, education consultant, and director of federal and non-profit education programs.



THE CREATORS

BRANDAN “BMIKE” ODUMS VISUAL ARTIST



Brandon “BMike” Odums is a New Orleans-based visual artist who, through exhibitions, public programs, and public art works, is engaged in a transnational dialogue about the intersection of art and resistance. From film to murals to installations, Odums’ work depicts historical figures, contemporary creatives and everyday people and encapsulates the political fervor of a generation of Black American activists. His work and community initiatives can be seen at www.BMike.com.

DEJUANA L. THOMPSON BCRI PRESIDENT & CEO

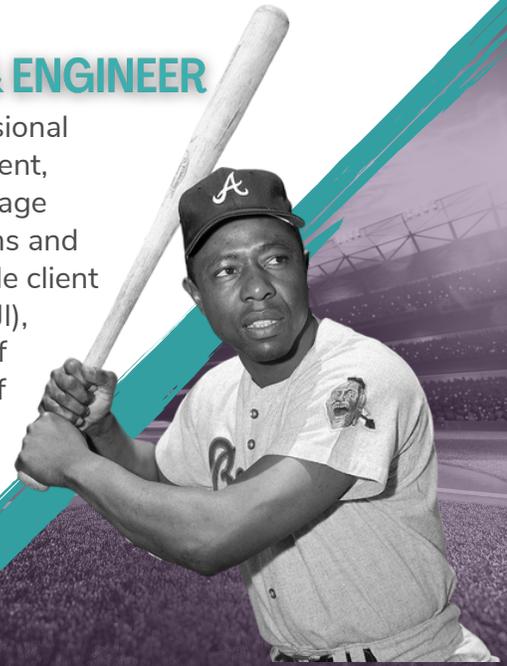
DeJuana L. Thompson is a political and social strategist providing innovative and sustainable engagement methods and models for candidates, campaigns, and community organizations. She is the current President and CEO of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, DeJuana L. Thompson is a political and social strategist providing innovative and sustainable engagement methods and models for candidates, campaigns, and community organizations.

Thompson is a founding partner with Think Rubix, a social innovation consultancy which helps nonprofits, businesses, and governments to engage in systems change to harness the transformative power of culture. She is also the founder of Woke Vote, an organization designed to engage, mobilize, and turnout African American voters in the South through campus and faith-based outreach, strategic media outreach, culturally relevant GOTV efforts and training for organizers.



TIM LEWIS ENTREPRENEUR, INNOVATOR, & ENGINEER

Tim Lewis and his company, TALA Professional Services, works with corporate, government, nonprofit, and community clients to leverage technology and innovation to solve problems and create memorable experiences. Lewis’ notable client roster includes Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), Mercedes-Benz USA International, City of Chattanooga, IBM Global Services, City of Tuscaloosa, Birmingham Civic Rights Institute, The University of Alabama, and among many others.





#JOINTHERACE

Join us in spreading the word to all of your followers!
The call to action is clear: **Join The Race**

#JoinTheRace is an opportunity to share stories on social media as a gateway for collaboration with athletes, community members, activists and future agents of change in celebration of The World Games and BCRI's *Race to Freedom* special exhibition.

Some athletes have been symbolic figures of black ability, while others have taken their activism beyond the court to the courtroom, boardroom and the newsroom. Because sports were among the first, and most high profile spaces to accept African Americans on relative terms of equality, sport has had a unique role within American culture. Within black communities, sports have always been political. From the refusal to allow African Americans an opportunity to compete to the formation of African American segregated sporting teams and leagues; from the hard won battles to compete at the highest levels of the game to the introduction of African American expressive cultural practices within the games, the African American presence in sports has had social and political consequences.

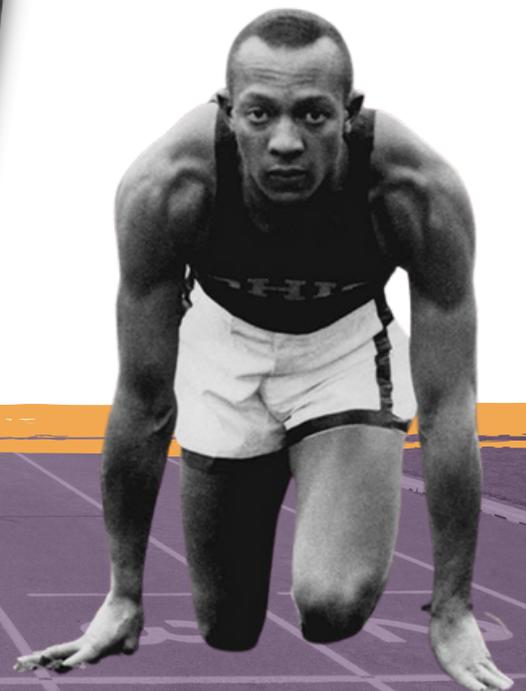
Join us in our exploration of the contributions of athletes, both on and off the field. Post about your BCRI and World Games experience using the hashtag **#JoinTheRace!**

STEP 1: Spread the word

Like, comment and share social media posts promoting the exhibit across your digital channels during The World Games, July 7 - 17, 2022

STEP 2: Use this key messaging

Spread the word about *Race to Freedom* and share Black sports facts with the hashtag **#JoinTheRace**.





AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SPORTS & THE MARATHON FOR PROGRESS
A BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE SPECIAL EXHIBIT

520 16th Street North · Birmingham, Alabama 35203
www.bcri.org · (205) 328-9696