Caring Institute Leads Celebration Of Frederick Douglass's 190th Birthday

Val J. Halamandaris, the founder of the Caring Institute and the Frederick Douglass Museum and Hall of Fame for Caring Americans, today called upon all Americans to celebrate the life of America's greatest advocate for human rights.

Washington, DC (PRWEB) February 17, 2008 -- Washington, DC - Val J. Halamandaris, the founder of the Caring Institute and the Frederick Douglass Museum and Hall of Fame for Caring Americans, today called upon all Americans to celebrate the life of America's greatest advocate for human rights.

"Frederick Douglass is a towering figure in American history, his contributions have enriched the lives not only of Americans but of men and women of goodwill throughout the world," said Halamandaris. "In fact, a good case can be made that Douglass should be carved on Mt. Rushmore."

Halamandaris offered the following ten reasons why Douglass should be accorded such a great honor and recognition:

1. Mr. Douglass is the quintessential personification of the American spirit. This is evident in the manner in which he transcended his birth as a slave, taught himself not only to read and to write but to become one of America's greatest orators and writers. His story is an inspiration to men and women the world over.

2. Mr. Douglass played a central role in encouraging president Abraham Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation which not only freed the slaves but tipped the balance of power and saved the union.

3. Mr. Douglass was the person most admired by Abraham Lincoln, who according to most polls is the most admired of all Americans - so much so that when the President was assassinated, his widow, Mary Todd Lincoln, sent the president's walking stick which he used every day to Frederick Douglass. It is still on display at the Frederick Douglass Museum and National Historical site in Anacostia in Washington, DC.

4. Mr. Douglass was without peer as an advocate for human rights. He inspired so many men and women both contemporaries and those who lived after him including: Mark Twain, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Booker T. Washington, Mahatma Gandhi, Hubert H. Humphrey, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Mary McLeod Bethune and Dorothy Height.

5. Mr. Douglass was the nation's most eloquent voice for equal rights for all. He fought tirelessly against discrimination on the basis of race, color and gender.

6. Mr. Douglass was one of the nation's most passionate advocates for equal rights for women. "I would give women the right to vote," he said "precisely as I insisted in giving the colored man the right to vote. Right is of no sex - truth is of no color - God is the father of us all and we are brethren."

7. Mr. Douglass lived his life according to the highest standards. He was the conscience of the nation. He was without peer as an advocate of peaceful, non-violent change whose goals were always to do what is right, to serve God and his fellow citizens.
8. Mr. Douglass was a great leader. He combined all three qualities which Aristotle (and other philosophers subsequently) have said were common to the greatest leaders. He had the ethos, the intellectual ability to see clearly what was happening in America and the vision to imagine the nation as it could be. He had the gift of pathos which is to empathize with others, to put himself in their shoes and to imagine how they felt. Finally, he had the quality of logos which is defined as the ability to use words and language which moves others to work together and take action not only in their best interest but in the best interests of all.

9. Mr. Douglass was one of the most caring people in the America. Caring is love in action. Mr. Douglass had every right to respond with hatred but he chose instead to love even those who had so oppressed and dehumanized him and thousands of others. Because he was so preeminent in this quality, the Caring Institute Trustees agreed to create The Hall of Fame for Caring Americans in what was his first Washington, DC, home located three blocks east of the U.S. Capitol.

10. Mr. Douglass should be carved on Mt. Rushmore because this honor is reserved for the best among us. A nation is what (and who) it honors. His presence there would not only salute him but serve to inspire present and yet unborn generations. This more than any symbol since the Statue of Liberty was installed in New York Harbor would reaffirm for the world at this critical time in our history what America is all about.

The Caring Institute was inspired by Mother Teresa in 1985 when she told Halamandaris there was a poverty of the spirit in the U.S. and the developed world that is far worse than the poverty of the body that is seen in the Third World. She directed him to "do something about this using the power of caring" which she called "the one word summary of the Golden Rule which runs through all the great religions of the world." The Caring Institute is a non profit 501(c) 3 organization which promotes the values of caring, integrity and public service. Among its programs is the National Caring Awards which involves the selection by secret ballot by its trustees of the most caring men and women in America and their induction into the Frederick Douglass Museum and Hall of Fame for Caring Americans.

The Caring Institute for the past 20 years has every year celebrated February 14 as the birthday of Mr. Douglass. The Institute marked today's 190th birthday day with a birthday party at its Frederick Douglass Museum and Hall of Fame for Caring Americans to be attended by school children from the District of Columbia. Fred Morsell, the actor, and author who is famous for his portrayal of Mr. Douglass, will preside over today's events which will also include an appearance at a student body assembly at the Maury School. For more information on the Caring Institute go to www.caring.org.

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