



**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Civil rights attorney Ben Crump announced as the keynote of Tampa Bay's first Black History Month reception**

*Preview the new gallery honoring Tampa Bay's Black communities*

(TAMPA, Nov. 15, 2021) – Throughout his career, attorney Ben Crump has remained steadfast in serving those without a voice and seeking justice in some of the most contentious legal cases of our time, including his role in the Trayvon Martin case. The Tampa Bay History Center is pleased to welcome this eyewitness to history to the first annual Black History Month Reception on Friday, Feb. 4, 2022.



*Embracing Our Ethnic Kaleidoscope* is the inspiration for the inaugural Black History Month Reception, launching a month of special programming and the start of expanding gallery exhibit space at the History Center focused on local Black history.

“It’s crucial that we share and learn from our diverse experiences,” said C.J. Roberts, the History Center’s president and CEO. “The History Center is a place where discovering and understanding our region’s past can inform our shared future. This reception will launch a series of special programming focused on Black history and showcase the upcoming gallery expansion.”

The first annual Black History Month Reception starts at 6 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 4, 2022, at the Tampa Bay History Center’s TECO Hall, 801 Water Street, Tampa, FL 33602.

“Representation matters,” said Fred Hearn, the History Center’s curator of Black history. “We have a unique opportunity to share tremendous stories of perseverance, uplift, and leadership with a new generation. Our commitment to preserving and sharing Black history runs deep as we expand our galleries with new artifacts.”

In addition to Crump’s keynote address, the Feb. 4 reception will honor Civil Rights Movement

leader Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. This will also mark the first annual presentation of the *Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. Award for the Preservation of Black History and Heritage*. This annual award recognizes an individual or group whose work and contributions have significantly enhanced the understanding and awareness of the Tampa Bay area's rich Black history.

LaFayette, who was born in Tampa, Fla., co-founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1960 and has spent the decades since as a Civil Rights Movement activist, minister, educator and lecturer on strategy and nonviolent social change.

In this spirit, the History Center, in partnership with Hillsborough County Public Schools, will also award funding to an outstanding middle school Thurgood Marshall History Club. Local chapters provide students the opportunity to learn, discuss and participate in activities related to Black history.

Individual reception tickets are available at <https://www.tampabayhistorycenter.org/black-history-month/> or (813) 228-0097.

### About the Tampa Bay History Center

Located on Tampa's Riverwalk, the Tampa Bay History Center includes three floors of permanent and temporary exhibition space focusing on 12,000 years of Florida's history and culture. A Smithsonian Affiliate museum and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the History Center includes the Touchton Map Library and Florida Center for Cartographic Education, and the Witt Research Center, and is home to the Columbia Cafe. One of Tampa's premier cultural venues, the History Center's hands-on, interactive exhibits and theaters provide an entertaining and educational experience for visitors of all ages. For more information, visit [www.tampabayhistorycenter.org](http://www.tampabayhistorycenter.org).

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