



Caribbean-American Political Action Committee

Advancing the political agenda of Caribbean Americans

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday October 12, 2019

Contact: Tonya Fasusi, Vice President Communications
202-349-1498 - communications.cpac.dmv@gmail.com

Dr. Julius Garvey, Son of Human Rights Icon The Right Hon. Marcus Garvey Delivers Keynote Address at C-PAC's 2019 Annual Founding Patrons' Luncheon

Washington, DC: Julius Garvey, the keynote speaker at the Caribbean Political Action Committee's (C-PAC) 14th annual Founding Patrons' Luncheon, called on attendees to train their minds to fulfill their potential, and to continue the organization's good work. Held on October 12th in Silver Spring Maryland, the well-attended event saw the son of Jamaica's first national hero encourage the attendees to remember their history and roots and to use it to propel themselves to greatness.

Dr. Julius Garvey, the keynote speaker at the Caribbean Political Action Committee's (C-PAC) 14th annual Founding Patrons' Luncheon, called on attendees to train their minds to fulfill their potential, and to continue the organization's good work. Held on October 12th in Silver Spring Maryland, the well-attended event saw the son of Jamaica's first national hero encourage the attendees to remember their history and roots and to use it to propel themselves to greatness.

"Marcus Garvey said God and nature first made us what we are, then out of our own creative genius, we make ourselves into what we want to be," he said. "The starting point is that we can transform ourselves, we can work on our minds to change the way we experience ourselves and the world. We're born with the necessary equipment to live lives that are satisfactory and fulfilling and to function in harmony with nature and with others," he said. He continued: "A mind awakened to its full potential knowing who you are and what you are, the way things are and what you should do under all circumstances... without such a clear purpose in life we won't know where we're going and what we're doing, just wandering around lost in a repetitive cycle of someone else's propaganda that has enslaved our minds. Marcus Garvey said we should liberate our minds from mental slavery," he said. Dr. Garvey said when people are disciplined, then they can become transformative agents for their communities. "Such a person who stays the course is a hero. We start with ourselves and become the change we want to see. Then perhaps following our example, friends and family may want to change, then others at a distance," he said.

After giving his speech, Dr. Garvey was honored with an official citation from the Maryland General Assembly, which was read by Maryland State Senator Arthur Ellis. The citation congratulated Dr. Garvey on his work to improve the health and well-being of people in the African Diaspora through teachings of 'unity and self-sufficiency.'

The luncheon also saw news brought by D.C. councilmember Brandon Todd. The Ward 4 representative said that a bill for an Office for Caribbean American Affairs is making its way through the D.C. legislature. Todd said that the bill which was introduced earlier this year would make such an office a first in the District. He is hoping to have the bill passed in January and the office fully funded for the 2021 budget. "Because of your advocacy we were able to introduce that bill and your continued advocacy will make sure that it is law and your priorities for the Caribbean American community is forefront in the District of Columbia," he said.

C-PAC co-founder, Chris Gardiner acknowledged the progress the group to garner political support. “In this our 14th year, C-PAC is beginning to reach beyond DC, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Northern Virginia, and into Charles County and Howard County. This is evidenced by the number of elected officials from these areas that are beginning to attend our events and seek our support,” he said. Media icon Kojo Nnamdi, another founding member of C-PAC praised the founding members of the committee and encouraged the present generation to continue the work.

In recounting the year that just passed, chair of C-PAC Dr. Goulda Downer showcased some of the highlights of the organization’s work for the period. Dr. Downer highlighted the fact that communication and collaboration was key to moving C-PAC forward. Dr. Downer highlighted that there were less than 137 active Caribbean organizations in the region and the goal in the next two years would be to identify as many to forge partnerships and inter-organizational relationships. “This process has already begun. Our shared collaborative vision was the inaugural Caribbean American ecumenical service of remembrance and celebration. A diverse set of Caribbean organizations partnered with C-PAC to make this seminal event very successful,” she said.

Dr. Downer also said that C-PAC has continued to meet with local politicians to educate them on issues important to the Caribbean American community and to encourage dialogue. A recent meeting with Maryland’s Prince Georges County Executive Angela Alsobrooks was one recent example. Issues of culture, education, the upcoming census and immigration were discussed. Out of the meeting, Alsobrooks requested members of C-PAC to collaborate on several of her committees. The Caribbean Advisory Council for the Prince George’s county is also on track to become a reality in 2020 due to C-PACs work.

C-PAC was also a strong advocate for the passage of a bill lauding August as Caribbean Heritage month in the State of Maryland. C-PAC elections will be held for three upcoming board vacancies with the terms to begin January 2020. The positions are vice-chair for membership, vice-chair for communication and vice-chair for member at large. Dr. Downer encouraged members to be part of the leadership team and run for office.



Dr. Julius Garvey (photo courtesy of fotosbygene)



Dr. Goulda Downer (photo courtesy of fotosbygene)

Founded in 2005, the overarching mission of C-PAC is to be the political voice, and to advance the political agenda of Caribbean-Americans residing in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area (DMV). To that end, C-PAC will endorse and support candidates for public office in the DMV to articulate policy positions that will strengthen the economic, educational, social, and cultural conditions of individuals of Caribbean heritage residing in the area. C-PAC also seeks to foster greater relationships between the U.S. Federal, State and Local governments and the nations of the Caribbean.