

# SISTERS OF FREEDOM

### **African American Women Moving Us Forward**

Drawing from its remarkable archive and additional sources, Syracuse Cultural Workers curated this inspirational and educational exhibit on African American women from the 1800's to present. While by no means exhaustive, "Sisters of Freedom" provides a dramatic glimpse of the power and passion of 41 women who have transformed their lives, their culture and their country. Ideal for colleges, schools, religious groups, unions, professional organizations, conferences, special events, and many other venues

**Sisters of Freedom** consists of six tri-fold panels (folds down to 3' x 4'). Lightweight and portable, it is meant to be displayed on six 6' tables and can be set up in 30 minutes.

### PANEL A (1 OF 6)

\*Sojourner Truth, The National Women's History Project, \*Harriet Tubman, \*Lucy Parsons

### PANEL B (2 OF 6)

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, \*Sarah Loguen Fraser, Mary McLeod Bethune, Zora Neale Hurston, Pauli Murray, Ella J. Baker

### PANEL C (3 of 6)

Septima P. Clark, Odetta, \*Rosa Parks, \*Claudette Colvin, 1961 Freedom Riders, Diane Nash

### PANEL D (4 of 6)

Fannie Lou Hamer, Dorothy Height, Dorothy Cotton, Marian Wright Edelman, Maya Angelou, Bernice Johnson Reagon, \*Nina Simone

### **PANEL E (5 of 6)**

Eleanor Holmes Norton, Unita Blackwell, Daisy Bates, Gloria St. Clair Hayes Richardson, Alice Walker, Coretta Scott King, Angela Davis, Shirley Chisholm, Cynthia McKinney, \*Barbara Lee

### PANEL F (6 of 6)

\*Audre Lorde, Homage to Kitchen Table Press, Barbara Smith, African American Women..., Anita Hill, Lateefah Simon, \*Ellen Blalock, Cheryl Contee, Kimberly Freeman Brown, Majora Carter, Imani Perry

\*related products available see back page

### SISTERS OF FREEDOM PROFILES

PANEL A:

Sojourner Truth, c. 1797-1883

ELOQUENT PREACHER, ABOLITIONIST AND

Born into slavery in New York as Isabella Baumfree (after her father's owner, Baumfree) she took the name Sojourner Truth after a religious conversion experience which led her to become a traveling preacher (the meaning of her new name). A powerful advocate of abolition, temperance and women's rights, from the 1840's through the late 1870's Sojourner traveled widely throughout the northern states, her personal magnetism drawing large crowds wherever she appeared.

**The National Women's History Project** was founded in 1980 with the goal of "writing women back into history." www.nwhp.org

### Harriet Tubman, c. 1820-1913

CONDUCTOR FOR THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, DARING CIVIL WAR SCOUT AND SPY

An escaped slave, Tubman worked as a lumberjack, laundress, nurse, and cook. As an abolitionist, she acted as intelligence gatherer, refugee organizer, raid leader, nurse, and fundraiser, all as part of the struggle for liberation from slavery and racism. Over the course of 10 years, and at great personal risk, she personally led hundreds of slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad, a secret network of safe houses where runaway slaves could stay on their journey north to freedom. In the nearly half-century she lived after the war ended, Harriet Tubman spoke for the rights of women and African Americans, helped organize the AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Zion Church, and set up a home for indigent, aged African Americans. About the poster:

This poster, published by SCW in 1987, uses Harriet Tubman's work as inspiration for the sanctuary movement which brought endangered Latin American activists to the US. These activists were opposing murderous regimes supported by the US. The poster was also a playbill for the *Underground Railroad Theatre Company* based in Boston.

### **Lucy Parsons**, c. 1853-1942

UNCOMPROMISING TRADE UNIONIST, RADICAL ORGANIZER AND SPEAKER, CO-FOUNDER IWW Born in Texas around 1853, it is likely that Parsons' parents were slaves with African American, Native American, and Mexican ancestry. In 1873 she and her husband Albert settled in Chicago and became integral to the socialist and anarchist movements seeking to improve the condition of the industrial working classes. For almost 70 years, she fought for the rights of the poor and disenfranchised in the face of an increasingly oppressive industrial economic system. Her radical activism challenged racist and sexist conventions in a time when even radical Americans believed that a woman's place was in the home.

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was founded in Chicago in June 1905 at a convention of two hundred so-

cialists, anarchists, and radical trade unionists who were opposed to the policies of the American Federation of Labor. The organizers believed that all workers should organize as a class, regardless of the industry in which they worked, and it was the only American union (besides the Knights of Labor) to welcome all workers including women, immigrants, African Americans and Asians into the same organization.

PANEL B:

### Ida B. Wells-Barnett, 1862-1931

FEARLESS ANTI-LYNCHING CRUSADER, SUFFRAGIST, WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCATE AND JOURNALIST Born a slave in 1862, Ida Wells became one of our nation's earliest civil rights leaders. Beginning in 1892 she carried out a national campaign against lynching – the hanging, burning or shooting of a person without trial. By the time of her death, lynching in the US had disappeared almost entirely, due largely to her efforts. A founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), she was among the few Black leaders to publicly oppose Booker T. Washington and his strategies. As a result, she was viewed as one of the most radical of the founders and was marginalized from its leadership positions.

The poster element "Signed, Iola," refers to the pen name she used for her early columns in the Black press.

### Sarah Loguen Fraser, 1850-1933

PIONEERING PHYSICIAN

Sarah Loguen, MD grew up in Syracuse, NY and became one of the nation's first African American women physicians. The daughter of abolitionists Caroline Storum and the Reverend Jermain Wesley Loguen, a former slave, Fraser was raised in a family that helped 1,500 African Americans on their dangerous escape from slavery to freedom.

### Mary McLeod Bethune, 1875-1955 VISIONARY EDUCATOR AND LEADER

In 1904, Mrs. Bethune opened a school for Negro girls in Daytona, FL with just five students. Through her abilities as an organizer, fundraiser and teacher, the school flourished, in 1929 becoming the co-educational Bethune-Cookman College. She founded the National Council of Negro Women in 1935, envisioning an "organization of organizations" that would represent the national and international concerns of Black women. From 1936-1945 she served as an informal special advisor to the Franklin Roosevelt administration and helped create the federal Council on Negro Affairs.

### **Zora Neale Hurston**, 1891-1960 FOLKLORIST AND WRITER OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Hurston grew up in the culturally affirming setting of Eatonville, FL, a rural community near Orlando that was the nation's first incorporated Black township. A graduate of Barnard College, she was the most successful and most significant Black woman writer of the first half of the 20th century. Over a career that spanned more than 30 years, she published four novels, two books of folklore, an autobiography, numerous short stories, and several essays, articles and plays.

### **Pauli Murray**, 1910-1985

FEMINIST, LAWYER, TEACHER AND ORDAINED MINISTER

The granddaughter of a slave and great-granddaughter of a slave owner, Murray rebelled against the segregation that was an accepted fact of life growing up in the "colored" section of Durham, NC. In 1944, while at Howard University Law School, she and other women students made one of the earliest uses of Gandhian tactics, successfully staging the first sit-in demonstration resulting in the desegregation of a cafeteria in Washington, DC. Her letter-writing campaign to the White House challenging the Roosevelt administration on domestic policies led to a lasting friendship and professional relationship with Eleanor Roosevelt. A founding member of the National Organization for Women (1966), she was the first Black woman and one of the first women to be ordained (1978) in the Episcopal Church.

"One person plus one typewriter constitutes a movement."

### Ella J. Baker, 1903-1986

"SPIRITUAL MOTHER" OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SNCC)

A lifelong social activist, in 1930 Baker joined the Young Negroes Cooperative League and in 1940 began her involvement with the NAACP. In 1957, she moved to Atlanta to organize with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), running a voter registration campaign called the Crusade for Citizenship. She stayed at SCLC for two years although she disagreed with its policy of strong central leadership over grassroots organization, saying "strong people don't need strong leaders."

### PANEL C.

### **Septima P. Clark**, 1898-1987

FOUNDER OF "CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS" THAT CREATED THE GRASSROOTS BASE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Fired from teaching in Charleston, SC in 1947 for being a member of the NAACP, Clark relocated to Monteagle, TN, teaching interracial adult education at the Highlander Folk School. There, Clark devised a curriculum that focused on promoting voter registration and empowering people to solve their issues through social activism. She created her first "Citizenship School" on John's Island in 1957. With Highlander activities constantly disrupted by the segregationist Tennessee legislature, in 1961 the citizenship program was transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). By 1970, when Septima Clark retired at age 72, some ten thousand citizenship school teachers trained by her and her colleagues had taught more than 100,000 Blacks to read and write and demand their rights as citizens.

Founded in 1932 by activist Myles Horton and others as a racially integrated education and training center, the **Highlander Center** focused in its early years on labor education and the training of labor organizers. From the

1950s on, its work nurtured the civil rights movement, and today it remains a catalyst for grassroots organizing and movement building in Appalachia and the South. www.highlandercenter.org

### Odetta, 1930-2008

FOLKSINGER, SONGWRITER, ACTIVIST

Born Odetta Holmes in Birmingham, AL during the Depression, the music of that time and place — particularly prison songs and work songs sung in the fields of the Deep South — shaped her life.

"They were liberation songs," she said in an interview with The New York Times. She added: "You're walking down life's road, society's foot is on your throat, every which way you turn you can't get from under that foot. And you reach a fork in the road and you can either lie down and die or insist upon your life." In 1953, Odetta was invited to perform at a folk club in NYC where her appearance inspired the help of Harry Belafonte and Pete Seeger. Her political visibility increased in the 60's as a major voice in the Civil Rights Movement, her songs blending the personal and the political, the theatrical and the spiritual.

### Rosa Parks, 1913-2005

NAACP STALWART, SPARK OF THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT, LIFELONG CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCATE The secretary and a long-time member of the NAACP, Parks was well-known to African American leaders in Montgomery for her opposition to segregation, her leadership abilities and her moral strength. On December 1, 1955, she refused to give up her seat to a white man on a bus, sparking the protest boycott which lasted 381 days, eventually succeeding in putting an end to this segregation.

### Claudette Colvin, b.1939

COURAGEOUS TEEN PLAINTIFF IN BROWDER V.
GAYLE, COURT DECISION THAT DESEGREGATED MONTGOMERY, AL BUSES

In March 1955 when she was a high school junior, Colvin was arrested, dragged backwards off the bus by police, handcuffed and jailed for refusing to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger. A year later, she and three other women sued the city of Montgomery and the state of Alabama, challenging the laws requiring segregated seating on buses. Only after they won their case were the city's buses integrated.

EDUCATION IS LIBERATION - THE ROSA PARKS MURAL, Graham-Parks School, Cambridge, MA, David Fichter, ©1986, detail of 10x25' mural

### **1961 Freedom Riders**, b.1938

50TH ANNIVERSAY COMMEMORATIVE POSTER Joseph Portiglione, Eric Etheridge Poster published by Syracuse Cultural Workers 1961 Freedom Riders Portraits

The Civil Rights Movement, roughly occurring 1954-1968, was one of the most significant and powerful social movements in US history. It didn't end racism or inequality, but it invalidated many of the institutions (segregated schools and housing, for example) that blocked progress towards true social justice. The 1961 Freedom Riders were a pivotal part of the Movement. These African American women, along with African American men and whites, rode vulnerable buses through Alabama and Mississippi challenging the South's defiance of the 1946 and 1960 Supreme Court rulings which desegregated interstate travel and related facilities.

Determined to not let violence stop the Rides, a group of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) members from Nashville left Birmingham for Montgomery, the state capitol, on May 20. They were savagely beaten by a mob of 200 people at the bus station. But they kept coming. Wave after wave for almost seven months. After a deal brokered by Attorney General Robert Kennedy with Mississippi's arch-segregationist Senator James Eastland, the Rides focused on Jackson, MS. Riders were immediately arrested and charged with "breach of the peace"when they integrated the white and "colored" waiting rooms, restrooms, and restaurants at the stations on arrival. The tenacity of the Riders pushed the Kennedy administration to enforce Federal desegregation laws in the South. This was a huge victory, and new life was pumped into the Civil Rights Movement by these (in the words of Roger Wilkins) "true American heroes with a passion for a fairer and more democratic nation."

Mississippi's State Sovereignty Commission was established in 1956,two years after Brown v. Board of Education, to preserve segregation against any outside efforts to change the status quo. Among its tasks was investigation of "integration organizations," so when the Riders began arriving, the Commission went into action compiling mug shots and arrest data, thus carefully (and unintentionally) preserving this remarkable piece of civil rights history.

In the seven-month protest the Riders "galvanized every branch of the Civil Rights Movement, binding its past to its future, its tactics to its soul." (Diane McWhorter) The Riders faced the firebombing of their bus, brutal beatings, and imprisonment at Mississippi's infamous state penitentiary, but still they kept coming.

Portraits excerpted from 50th anniversary commemorative poster published in 2011 by Syracuse Cultural Workers. Poster based on the book Breach of Peace by Eric Etheridge and Joseph Portiglione.

### Diane Nash, b.1938

DARING STUDENT ORGANIZER AND STRATEGIST Diane Nash was a leader and strategist of the student wing of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement. She was bright, focused, utterly fearless, with an unerring instinct for the correct tactical move at each increment of the crisis. As a leader, her instincts were flawless, and she was the kind of person who pushed those around her to be at their best – that, or be gone from the movement. Nash's campaigns were among the most successful of the

era. Her efforts included the first successful civil rights campaign to de-segregate lunch counters (Nashville); the Freedom Riders, who de-segregated interstate travel facilities; founding the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); and the Selma Voting Rights Movement campaign, which resulted in African Americans getting the vote and political power throughout the South.

### PANEL D.

### Fannie Lou Hamer, 1917-1977 COMMITTED CITIZEN ACTIVIST

Hamer became involved in the civil rights movement in 1962 when she volunteered to attempt to register to vote. By then 45 years old and a mother, Hamer lost her job and survived a brutal beating as the price of her activism. Despite this, she spoke frequently to raise money for the movement, and helped organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to challenge white domination of the Democratic Party. In 1964, the MFDP challenged the all-white Mississippi delegation to the Democratic Convention, and in 1968, the Convention seated an integrated challenge delegation from Mississippi. She is buried in her home town of Ruleville, MS, where her tombstone reads, "I am sick and tired of being sick and tired."

### Dorothy Height, 1912-2010

ICONIC LEADER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN

Originally trained as a social worker, Height was president of the National Council of Negro Women from 1957 to 1997, overseeing a range of programs on issues like voting rights, poverty and in later years AIDS. A longtime executive of the YWCA, she presided over the integration of its facilities nationwide in the 1940s. Her career in civil rights spanned nearly 80 years, from anti-lynching protests in the early 1930s to the inauguration of President Obama in 2009. She was among the few in the modern civil rights era to treat the problems of equality for women and equality for African Americans as a seamless whole, merging concerns that had been largely historically separate.

### **Dorothy Cotton**, b. 1930

FORCEFUL SCLC (SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE) ORGANIZER

Dorothy Cotton was Educational Director of the SCLC, recruiting candidates for training as citizenship school teachers, and monitoring the progress of the schools themselves. Cotton helped organize the students during the 1963 Birmingham Movement and its Children's Crusade.

### Marian Wright Edelman, b. 1939

FOUNDING MEMBER OF SNCC, POWERFUL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER, ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN

Mrs. Edelman, a graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School, began her career in the mid-60s when, as the first Black woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar, she directed the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund office in Jackson, MS. In 1968, she was counsel for the Poor People's Campaign that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. began organizing before his death. She founded the Washington Research Project, a public interest law firm and the parent body of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF). For two years she served as the Director of the Center for Law and Education at Harvard University and in 1973 began CDF, the nation's strongest voice for children and families.

### Maya Angelou (1928-2014) CELEBRATED POET AND AUTHOR

Maya Angelou's path has taken her from the hardscrabble Depression-era South, through life as a prostitute, Broadway performer, coordinator for the SCLC, journalist in Egypt and Ghana in the heady days of decolonization, and friend and comrade of Malcolm X and James Baldwin. As one of the first African American women to publicly discuss her personal life, she is known particularly for the six volumes of her autobiography, and highly respected as a spokesperson for Black people and women.

## **Bernice Johnson Reagon**, b. 1942, COMPOSER, MUSICIAN, SONGTALKER

The daughter of a minister, Bernice Johnson grew up in a strong tradition of singing sacred music. For her first 11 years the church had no piano, and all singing was accompanied only by hands and feet. This grounding in a cappella music and a congregational song style was the bedrock on which she founded **Sweet Honey In the Rock**, the popular African American women's ensemble. She was Secretary of the NAACP at Albany State College in 1959 as the sit-in movement erupted with students sitting-in at lunch counters and other racially segregated establishments. Joining the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), she demonstrated her conviction that song and singing built group cohesiveness helping to make political change.

From 1973-2004, she was the guiding hand of **Sweet Honey** and "her" singing has made a path for many through countless changes in the struggles around ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.

### **Nina Simone**, 1933-2003 PIANIST, COMPOSER, SINGER

Born Eunice Kathleen Waymon in Tryon, NC, Nina Simone was an instinctive musician, an original, versatile singer, pianist, arranger and composer. Her repertoire included jazz standards, gospels and spirituals, classical pieces, folk, blues, pop, African chants, show tunes and her own compositions.

On March 24, 1965 she performed her protest song *Mississippi Goddam* before 40,000 marchers at the conclusion of the third Selma to Montgomery (AL) march. It was one of many songs she either wrote and/or performed that addressed civil rights, and Black liberation and identity.

PANEL E.

### **Daisy Bates** (1914-1999) COURAGEOUS PUBLISHER

Daisy and L.C. Bates started a weekly black newspaper, the Arkansas State Press on May 9, 1941, and made it into an outspoken voice for racial justice. They crusaded against police brutality, and reported on slum housing, job discrimination and injustice in the legal system. In 1952, Mrs. Bates was elected president of the Arkansas Conference of the NAACP. Following the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision, she pressured the Little Rock school board to desegregate Central High. Despite being the target of violent and determined segregationists, she guided and advised the students, known as the Little Rock Nine, when they attempted to enroll in 1957 at Little Rock High School. The Bates' involvement in the Little Rock Crisis provoked retaliation from white advertisers. and the newspaper was forced to close in 1959. In 1960, Daisy Bates moved to NYC and wrote her memoir, The Long Shadow of Little Rock, which won a 1988 National Book Award.

### Gloria St. Clair Hayes Richardson b.1922

UNCOMPROMISING ORGANIZER

In the early 1960's, SNCC targeted Cambridge, MD for a campaign focusing on public accommodations. Local activists, among them Gloria Richardson, responded by founding the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee (CNAC), the only adult-led affiliate in SNCC's history. These local activists went beyond voting rights to focus on ending discrimination in housing, education and hiring. CNAC demonstrations and counter-demonstrations were volatile, and on June 13, 1963 the National Guard was called in and martial law declared. Initially acquiescing to a settlement negotiated by Robert Kennedy's Department of Justice (DOJ), Richardson withdrew her support when the granting of civil rights to blacks was put up for community referendum. She urged a boycott of the polls, arguing that people's human rights were not something that should be voted upon by the general population.

### **Unita Blackwell** b. 1933

**COMMUNITY LEADER** 

In 1964 Unita Blackwell, a former sharecropper, welcomed SNCC organizers into her community of Mayersville, MS. She was typical of the many local women who played crucial roles in enlisting support for the movement among leaders in their communities, particularly among ministers, who were often strongly opposed. She was later a member of the executive committee of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and worked with the National Council of Negro Women. In 1992 she received a MacArthur Fellowship.

"Who's the people that really keeps things going on? It's women. The women is the ones that supports the deacon board. They holler the amen. The women is the ones that supports the preacher.... So in the black community the movement quite naturally emerged out of all the women

that carried out these roles." – Unita Blackwell "It was like Christopher Columbus: You're discovering what's already there. Well, that was discovering Unita Blackwell. She was already in charge, and she was just waiting for us to recognize it." – Civil rights organizer Charles Cobb

### **Eleanor Holmes Norton** b. 1937

LAWYER, FEMINIST

A SNCC organizer, Mrs. Norton participated in Mississippi Freedom Summer and in 1965 became the assistant legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union. She headed the NYC Civil Rights Commission in the Lindsay administration, and was a signer of the Black Woman's Manifesto, a classic document of the Black feminist movement. Appointed the first female Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1977, she aggressively enforced constitutional protections against sex discrimination. In 1990, Norton, along with 15 other African American women and men, formed African-American Women for Reproductive Freedom. She is currently serving her 11th term as the Congressional Representative of the District of Columbia.

### Alice Walker, b. 1944

**AUTHOR, POET AND ACTIVIST** 

Walker's most famous novel, *The Color Purple*, won both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award. Her writings include novels, stories, essays and poems. They focus on the struggles of African Americans, and particularly African American women, against societies that are racist, sexist, and often violent. Her writings emphasize the strength of Black women and the importance of African American heritage and culture. She is active in environmental, feminist, civil rights, and animal rights causes.

### **Coretta Scott King**, 1927 – 2006 ACTIVIST AND CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER

The widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King was an active partner with her husband in the civil rights movement. The Kings traveled and marched together whenever possible and Mrs. King organized and performed in a series of Freedom Concerts to raise funds for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Her most prominent role may have been in the years after her husband's 1968 assassination, when she took on the leadership of the struggle for racial equality herself. As a lifelong advocate for world peace, Mrs. King was one of the founders of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy and in 1962 was a delegate at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

### Angela Davis, b. 1944

RADICAL, ACTIVIST SCHOLAR

Davis, who was associated with the Black Panther Party, works for racial and gender equity and for prison abolition, and is now a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Although she is no longer a member of the

Communist Party, Davis points to Cuba as an example of a country which successfully addresses social and economic problems. In her view, democracy and socialism are more compatible than democracy and capitalism.

### Shirley Chisholm, 1924-2005

FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN ELECTED TO CON-GRESS, CANDIDATE (1972) FOR DEMOCRATIC NOMINA-TION FOR PRESIDENT, ADVOCATE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AND THE POOR

### Quote on poster:

"... Prejudice and hatred built the nation's slums, maintains them and profits by them.... Unless we start to fight and defeat the enemies in our own country, poverty and racism, and make our talk of equality and opportunity ring true, we are exposed in the eyes of the world as hypocrites when we talk about making people free."

"Fighting Shirley Chisholm — Unbought and Unbossed" was her campaign slogan for New York's 12th Congressional District race in 1968. Chisholm won — and stayed true to her words throughout her political career. She opposed the Viet Nam War and weapons development at a time when it was unpopular to do so, and relentlessly fought for the rights of women, children, minorities, and the poor.

She was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, holding it accountable as "the conscience of Congress." In 1972, Chisholm announced her candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination, the first African American woman to do so. Although she did not receive the nomination, she won 28 delegates and 152 votes at the Democratic National Convention.

### Barbara Lee, b. 1946

US CONGRESSWOMAN (D-CA), FORCEFUL PROGRESSIVE VOICE

First elected in 1998 to represent California's 9th Congressional District, Lee has established a reputation for principled and independent stands. She cast the lone dissenting vote against George W. Bush's use-of-force resolution, 9/14/2001, denying him unanimous support to wage war against Afghanistan in retaliation for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Lee works for social and economic justice, international peace, and civil and human rights.

### **Cynthia McKinney**, b. 1955 US CONGRESSWOMAN (D-GA), GREEN PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

#### Quote on poster:

"In the fight against bigotry, we stand together, and we must. In the fight against injustice, we stand together, and we must. In the fight against intimidation, we stand together, and we must. After all, a regime that would steal an election right before our very eyes will do anything to all of us."

In 1992, McKinney became the first African American woman to represent Georgia in the US Congress. Though a Democrat during President Clinton's tenure, she voted against NAFTA, supported a Palestinian State in the Occupied Territories, and sparked controversy by criticizing US policy in the Middle East, including policy regarding Iraq before 9/11. She was defeated in the 2002 election, but was re-elected in 2004. A vocal critic of the government's response to Hurricane Katrina, in 2007 she left the Democratic Party to join the Green Party.

### PANEL F.

### **Audre Lorde**, 1934-1992

WRITER AND ACTIVIST

A pioneering thinker active in the civil rights, antiwar, and feminist movements, in her own words Lorde was a "Black lesbian, mother, warrior, poet." Through her work and life she confronted the injustices of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Fighting a battle with cancer that she documented in her highly acclaimed *Cancer Journals*, Lorde died of the illness in 1992.

Before she died, in an African naming ceremony she took the name *Gamba Adisa*, meaning Warrior: She Who Makes Her Meaning Known.

Homage to Kitchen Table Press Elizabeth Barakah Hodges, © 1997, mixed acrylic and collage In 1980, Audre Lorde telephoned Barbara Smith and said, "Barbara, we need to do something about publishing." Out of that conversation the two women co-founded *Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press* to publish books by women of color of all races/ethnicities, national origins, sexual orientations, and socio-economic classes. With the help of a multiracial collective, the women established the world's first publishing company run autonomously by women of color. The name *Kitchen Table* was chosen because, across the world, the kitchen is the center of the home and the place where women share their wisdom.

### Barbara Smith, b. 1946

PIONEERING BLACK FEMINIST, AUTHOR

Barbara Smith has opened up a national cultural and political dialogue about the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and gender. As an innovative critic, teacher, activist, lecturer, author, independent scholar, and publisher, Barbara was among the first to define an African American women's literary tradition and to build Black women's studies and Black feminism in the US. She was among the authors of the *Combahee River Collective Statement* of 1974 that defined a vision for social change that was both anti-racist and anti-sexist.

### **African American Women In Defense Of Ourselves**

Within hours of Anita Hill's testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on October 11, 1991, Elsa Barkley Brown, Barbara Ransby, and Deborah King had launched a nationwide campaign to protest the events surrounding Clarence Thomas' nomination to the Supreme Court. In a few days they had gathered 1,603 Black women's signatures for a three quarter page ad which appeared in the New York Times and six Black newspapers. This poster commemorating the ad was published by Kitchen Table Press.

### Anita Hill, b. 1956

ATTORNEY AND SCHOLAR, BRAVE WOMAN In 1991 Anita Hill testified at the confirmation hearings for U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. Her charges of sexual harassment focused national attention on issues of race and gender in the workplace, though Thomas was confirmed and took a seat on the Court.

### **Lateefah Simon**, b. 1977 ADVOCATE FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

### Quote on poster:

"I live in a country where we put children in shackles and in concrete cells. Working together, with righteousness and hope, we can create a country that is about reverence and reconciliation, not a world of shackles and concrete cells." MacArthur Fellow Lateefah Simon is a civil rights and community leader who has advocated on behalf of communities of color, youth and women since her teenage years. At age 16, Simon was recruited to become part of the Huckleberry Youth Program, a group for girls at risk of incarceration. She became an outreach worker for the Center for Young Women's Development, a peer-run group helping young women to become self-sufficient and educated about their opportunities.

Named executive director of the Center in 1998, she now directs the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights (San Francisco) and is a nationally recognized advocate for juvenile and criminal justice reform.

#### Ellen Blalock

COMMUNITY ARTIST AND STORY TELLER

Ellen Blalock is a Syracuse, NY artist whose art examines and investigates the human experience.

**Angel Quilt** by Ellen Blalock

fabric, beads, found objects, 98x82", 2001

This quilt brings to life a story spanning 3 generations of the artist's family, honoring family elders and sharing history in the hope that generations to come will also build strong families. Poster published by Syracuse Cultural Workers.

### **Cheryl Contee**

**BLOGGER AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVIST** 

Contee works with non-profit organizations and foundations to use social media to create social good. She is also a co-founder of the blog *Jack and Jill Politics*, writing as "Jill Tubman."

### **Kimberly Freeman Brown**

LABOR ORGANIZER AND STRATEGIST

As executive director of American Rights at Work Brown directs a national non-profit educational and outreach organization dedicated to promoting the freedom of workers to form unions and bargain collectively.

### **Majora Carter**

URBAN VISIONARY, SUSTAINABILITY ADVOCATE Carter is a radical voice in city planning who views urban renewal through an environmental lens. The South Bronx native draws a direct connection between ecological, economic and social degradation. Hence her motto: "Green the ghetto!" With her inspired ideas and fierce persistence, Carter managed to bring the South Bronx its first open-waterfront park in 60 years, Hunts Point Riverside Park. Carter, who was awarded a 2005 MacArthur "genius" grant, served as executive director of Sustainable South Bronx for 7 years, where she pushed both for eco-friendly practices (such as green and cool roofs) and, equally important, job training and green-related economic development for her neighborhood.

### **Imani Perry** b. 1972 SCHOLAR, ACTIVIST

Imani Perry is a Professor in the Center for African American Studies at Princeton University. She is an interdisciplinary scholar who studies race and African American culture using the tools provided by various disciplines including: law, literary and cultural studies, music, and the social sciences. She is the author of *More Terrible, More Beautiful, The Embrace and Transcendence of Racial Inequality in the U.S* as well as 2004's Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Americans Who Tell the Truth** is a collection of 150 portraits and quotes by Maine artist Robert Shetterly which demonstrate it has been the courage of dissidents that has won the freedoms Americans cherish. www.americanswhotellthetruth.org

**Bread and Roses** is a cultural project of the Services Employees International Union, SEIU 1199. Founded in 1979 in NYC by Moe Foner it brings dignity and vitality to working people's lives.

National Women's History Project (NWHP), founded in Santa Rosa, CA in 1980, provides information and training in multicultural women's history for educators, community organizations, and others. www.nwhp.org

**SCW** Working with over 1,000 artists since 1982 SyracuseCulturalWorkers.com has published and distributed an array of products that promote human and civil rights, peace, sustainability and economic justice.

# EXHIBIT CURATED AND PRODUCED BY SYRACUSE CULTURAL WORKERS USING ARCHIVAL POSTERS & ADDITIONAL SOURCES SyracuseCulturalWorkers.com

### **RELATED "Sisters of Freedom" PRODUCTS**

(visit: SyracuseCulturalWorkers.com)

### **PANEL A:**

- Sojourner Truth notecard C702CW
- Harriet Tubman poster P742CW; notecard C735CW; postcards T147CW, T733CW

### **PANEL B**

Sarah Loguen Fraser - notecard C941CW

### **PANEL C**

- Rosa Parks notecard C734CW
   Rosa Sat, Martin Walked, Obama Ran poster
   P658CW; notecard C040CW; bookmark 3169;
   magnet M014; postcards T057, T062;
   button 1356, sticker 2360
- African American Women Freedom Riders poster

### P738CW

#### **PANEL D**

- Fannie Lou Hamer button 1152; sticker 2069
- Nina Simone notecard C060CW

### **PANEL E**

 Barbara Lee - poster P545CW; notecard C857CW; postcard T867CW

### **PANEL F**

- Ellen Blalock poster Angel Quilt P591CW
- Audre Lorde poster P370CW; postcard T450CW

Visit our website for many other resources to complement this exhibit.
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