

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**10 MILESTONES OF CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT TO BE
REMEMBERED AND CELEBRATED ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMPS**

Larger Image Below...

WASHINGTON – The images of 10 U.S. postage stamps commemorating the historic events of the Civil Rights Movement will be unveiled tonight at 8 p.m. ET in conjunction with a performance of the musical stage play that recounts the experiences of Civil Rights activist Dr. Dorothy I. Height.

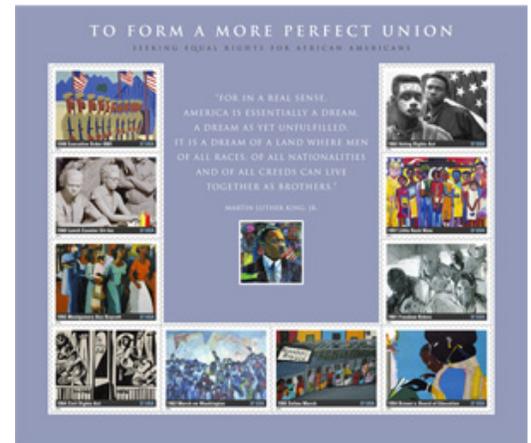
The production, “If This Hat Could Talk,” based on the memoirs of Dr. Height, runs through June 26 at Washington DC’s historic Lincoln Theater.

Taking their title from the Constitution of the United States, the “To Form A More Perfect Union” stamps recognize the courage and achievements of the men and women who, during the years of the Civil Rights Movement, struggled to bring the vision of our founding fathers closer to reality.

These new stamps are part of the Postal Service’s 2005 stamp program celebrating the people and events that have shaped the history of our nation. The “To Form a More Perfect Union” stamps commemorate 10 important milestones of the Civil Rights Movement — Brown v. Board of Education (Topeka, KS); Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Memphis, TN); Freedom Riders (Jackson, MS); Little Rock Nine (Little Rock, AR); Lunch Counter Sit-Ins (Greensboro, NC); Montgomery Bus Boycott (Montgomery, AL); Selma March (Selma, AL); Executive Order 9981; March on Washington, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Washington, DC).

“I cannot think of a more perfect setting for a sneak preview of these stamps than at this play,” said Delores Killete, Postmaster, Washington, DC, who unveiled the stamps. “Dr. Height’s untold stories offer great insight into a number of significant moments in America’s Civil Rights Movement. The Postal Service is proud to illustrate those moments with these new stamps.”

“The United States Postal Service has to be commended for the issuance of the ‘To Form A More Perfect Union’ stamps,” said Dr. Height, Chair/President Emerita, National Council of Negro Women, Inc. “They herald the struggle of men, women and children in the quest for equality. They are a fitting reminder that the work yet to be done must be built upon the contributions made by millions to bring



our country to a better place. They enhance our awareness of our history and challenge us all to work day-by-day until the American dream is a reality.”

Height was one of the major leaders of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. She marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., sat in sessions with Stokely Carmichael, rode with Rosa Parks and participated in meetings with President John F. Kennedy. Height’s lifetime of achievement is marked with the liberation of Black America, the brilliant advancement of women’s rights, and the most determined effort to lift up the poor and powerless. Nothing has been out of her reach and the realm of her reach has been massive.

Joining Kilette and Height was Wade Henderson, Executive Director, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

The stamp art, designed by Ethel Kessler, uses details from contemporary artworks to illustrate all of the historical events commemorated on the stamp sheet. The image used on the selvage is a detail from a painting made by Louis Delsarte in 2000, From Selma to Montgomery. A short description of each event that is part of the “To Form A More Perfect Union” stamp pane is detailed below:

Brown v. Board of Education

A unanimous ruling of the United States Supreme Court in the case of Brown v. Board of Education declared that separate educational facilities for black and white children are inherently unequal. The landmark ruling is suggested by Romare Bearden’s lithograph, “The Lamp” (1984).

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Designed to provide broad protections against discrimination on the basis of race, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Among its other provisions, the law prohibited discrimination in public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants and theaters. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is suggested by “Dixie Café,” a 1948 brush-and-ink drawing by Jacob Lawrence.

Freedom Riders

To test a ruling that outlawed segregation of bus stations and terminals serving interstate travelers, biracial groups of men and women volunteered to take bus rides through the South, using the “wrong” facilities at stops. Several Freedom Riders were injured because of mob violence instigated by segregationists, eliciting an outpouring of support and concern. A gouache by May Stevens called “Freedom Riders” (1963) honors the volunteers.

Little Rock Nine

After the Supreme Court declared segregated schools unconstitutional in Brown v. Board of Education (1954), many public school systems were slow to adapt to the new legal reality. In 1957, nine courageous students became the first African Americans to attend Central High School in Little Rock, AR, where they endured virulent harassment and received the protection of federal troops. George Hunt’s painting, “America Cares” (1997) remembers the nine courageous students.

Lunch Counter Sit-Ins

When four African-American college students placed an order at a “whites only” lunch counter in Greensboro, NC, in 1960, they sparked acts of civil disobedience in many other cities. The sit-in movement to integrate “whites-only” lunch counters is recalled by an exhibit created for the National Civil Rights Museum by StudioEIS, a design and fabrication firm in New York.

Montgomery Bus Boycott

After Rosa Parks was arrested on Dec. 1, 1955, for refusing to let a white passenger take her seat on a Montgomery, AL, bus, African Americans began a prolonged boycott of the bus company by walking or carpooling for more than a year. On Dec. 21, 1956, black passengers once again rode Montgomery City Lines. The Boycott is represented by a detail from “Walking,” a 1958 painting by Charles Alston.

Selma March

In the spring of 1965, demonstrators demanding an end to discrimination gathered in Selma, AL, to march to the state capital, Montgomery, 50 miles away. This is represented by "Selma March," a 1991 acrylic painting by Bernice Sims.

Executive Order 9981

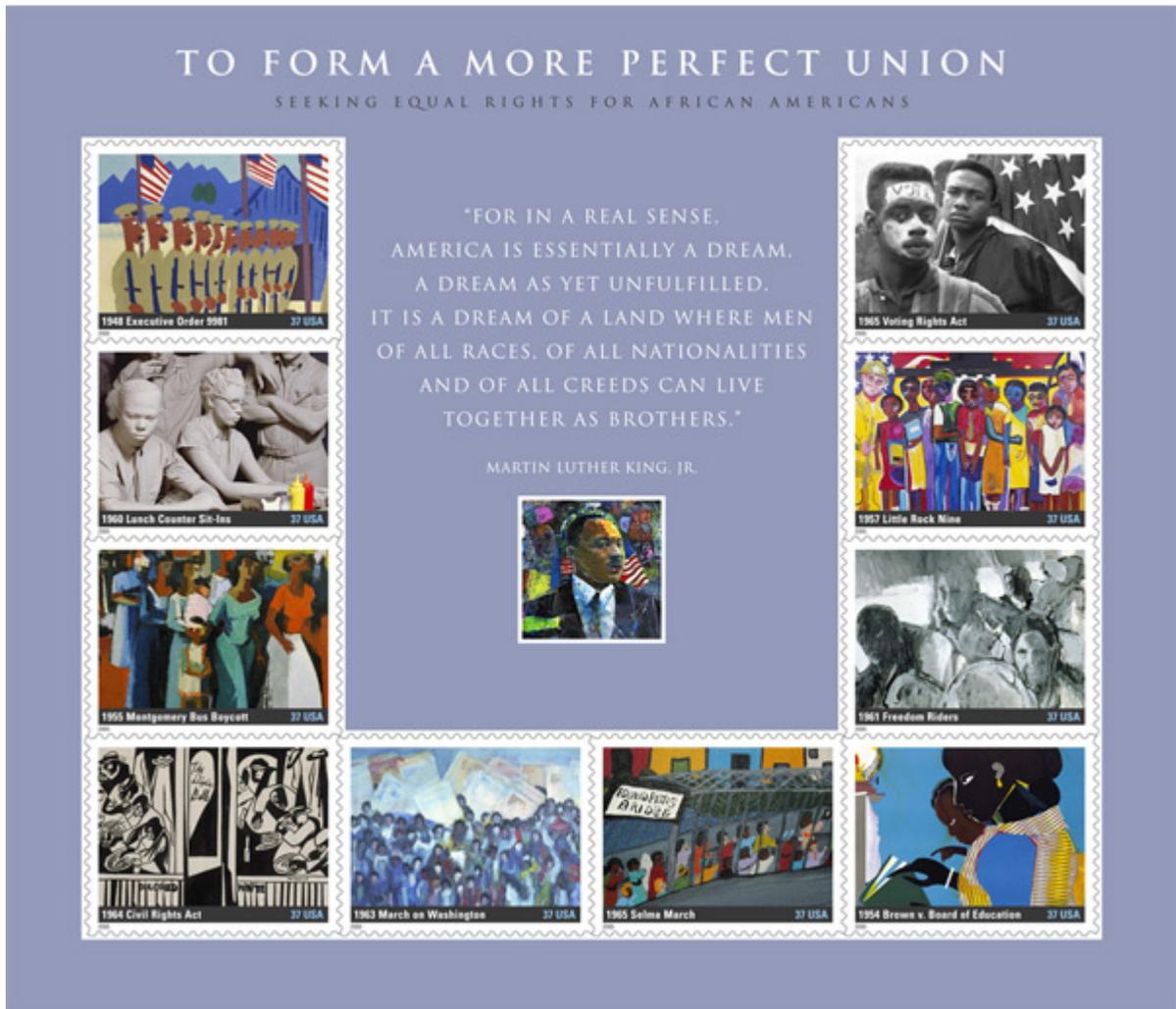
On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 mandating full integration in all branches of the U.S. military. By the time the Korean conflict ended in the following decade, this had largely been achieved. William H. Johnson's "Training for War," a silk-screen print made circa 1941, recalls President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order.

March on Washington

More than 250,000 people marched in Washington, DC, for racial justice in 1963, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. "March on Washington," painted in 1964 by Alma Thomas, commemorates the great demonstration.

Voting Rights Act of 1965

With leaders of the civil rights movement standing by, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, strengthening the federal government's ability to prevent state and local governments from denying citizens the right to vote because of their race. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is suggested by Bruce Davidson's photograph "Youths on the Selma March," (1965).



Beyond the stamps, other collectables will be available Aug. 30, after the stamps are issued. To Form A More Perfect Union philatelic products include: \$5.20 Item #567199 First-Day Cover Digital Color Postmark Keepsake (Full Pane with random single color postmark First-Day Cover); \$9.90 Item #567193 Cancellation Keepsake (Full Pane of stamps and a Full Pane canceled); \$8.95 Item #567196 Cultural Diary Page (two diary pages - one w/text and one for stamp; pane of stamps; stamp mount); \$34.95 Item #458096 Expressions of African Americans: A "Cultural Diary" (book with 4 diary pages/w stamps – author James Baldwin, athlete Wilma Rudolph, Kwanzaa and actor/singer Paul Robeson; a writing tablet)

Also available is the Marian Anderson Cultural Diary page (diary page, pane of stamps and illustrated envelope) Item #458076 \$12.95.

The Arthur Ashe commemorative stamp will be issued Aug. 27 during Arthur Ashe Kid's Day activities at the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament in Flushing, NY. Upon the stamp's release, the Arthur Ashe Cultural Diary Page Item #457496 \$12.95, will be available, as will a single diary page, stamp mount and full pane/sheet of 20 Arthur Ashe stamps.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1-800-STAMP-24. A wide selection of stamps and other philatelic items is also available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to the home or office are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.