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BLACK CREATIVITY: 50 YEARS

Exhibition shares story of the creation and legacy of program on its 50th anniversary

CHICAGO (January 20, 2020)—The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI) marks the 50th anniversary of Black Creativity, one of the country’s longest running showcases of African - American achievements in 2020 with a new exhibit, *Black Creativity: 50 Years*. This gallery is a visual timeline that shares the story of the program’s creation and highlights the innovators whose work pushed boundaries in the fields of science, technology, engineering, art and medicine.

Since 1970, Black Creativity has included a robust series of exhibits, experiences and events, encouraging guests, especially students, to realize their full potential in creative and scientific fields. The program began as Black Esthetics, an arts and cultural festival, in collaboration with John H. Sengstacke, publisher of the influential Chicago Defender newspaper and Dr. John Hope Franklin, a history professor at the University of Chicago and MSI board member. The program co-founders were; Photojournalist Robert (Bobby) Sengstacke, Earl Calloway, the Chicago Defender’s fine arts editor, and members of Chicago’s South Side Community Art Center, such as artist Douglas R. Williams. *Black Creativity: 50 Years* shares key moments in the program’s history with photos and artifacts, as well as highlights the achievements of African-American groundbreakers including:

- **Beverly L. Green:** The first African-American woman licensed to practice architecture in the U.S.
- **Darlene Blackburn:** Acclaimed dancer, choreographer and teacher who founded the Darlene Blackburn Dance Troupe.
- **Charles A. Harrison:** An industrial designer who redesigned the View-Master toy to what we know it as today.

“Celebrating this 50-year partnership between the Museum of Science and Industry and generations of African-American artists and innovators is a powerful moment in history,” said Myiti Sengstacke-Rice, President and CEO of the Chicago Defender Charities, Inc., and daughter of Robert (Bobby) Sengstacke, son of John H. Sengstacke, whose photographic work and personal camera are displayed in the exhibit. “It highlights the importance of investing in our youth through collaborative programs that bring the best of our community’s resources to the fore front. We are thankful for the visionary founders of Black Esthetics, now known as Black Creativity and joyfully celebrate the longevity of their contributions.”

The ***Juried Art Exhibition***, one of the original experiences of Black Creativity, is the longest running exhibition of African-American art in the nation. Today, the program also includes the **Innovation Studio**, a hands-on workshop for young people to become inventors by designing a prototype; the **Innovator Gallery**, which celebrates Chicago professionals in scientific and creative fields; **Jr. Science Cafes** and the **Career Showcase**, which connect students with diverse career paths; and the Black Creativity Gala, which supports the program and its events.

Black Creativity begins January 20, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and continues through Black History Month, ending March 1. More details can be found at msichicago.org/bc50.

The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI), one of the largest science museums in the world, offers world-class and uniquely interactive experiences that inspire inventive genius and foster curiosity. From groundbreaking and award-winning exhibits that can't be found anywhere else, to hands-on opportunities that make you the scientist—a visit to MSI is where fun and learning mix. Through its Welcome to Science Initiative, the Museum offers a variety of student, teacher and family educational programs that make a difference in communities and contribute to MSI's larger vision: to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in science, technology, medicine and engineering. The Museum is exceptionally grateful for the support of its donors and guests, who make its work possible. MSI is also supported in part by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, visit msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414.