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Liberian Government Honors Late Civil Rights Legend

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Washington, D.C. – April 10, 2013: “I want to be remembered as someone who used herself and everything she could touch to work for justice and freedom ... I want to be remembered as one who tried.” These were the words of the late Dr. Dorothy Irene Height, legendary civil and women’s rights leader, who left a legacy as a fighter for justice and freedom not just in the United States but in the world.

An educator, who was one of the 100 greatest African Americans, but also an internationalist, Dr. Height died in April 2010 at the age of 98 in Washington, D.C.

It was in consideration of her invaluable and sacrificial services to the cause of humanity that Dr. Height, a founding matriarch of the U.S. civil rights movement, was honored posthumously by the Government of Liberia during festivities commemorating Liberia’s 163rd independence anniversary on July 26, 2010.

In order to confer the distinction posthumously, a special ceremony was held at the Embassy of Liberia on April 9, 2013, attended by leaders and members of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and the Bridges Institute.

The NCNW, which Dr. Height served as Chair and President Emeritus, is one of the most prominent civil rights movements in the United States, while the Bridges Institute seeks to promote good governance in Africa and enhance perceptions of African intellectual capital.

During the impressive ceremony, Liberia’s Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Jeremiah C. Sulunteh, spoke of the legacy of Dr. Height not just as a leader of civil and women’s rights in the United States, but also in the world, particularly Liberia.

Ambassador Sulunteh, who performed the investiture ceremony on behalf of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Government and people of Liberia, recalled that during the Liberian Civil War, Dr. Height played a critical role in getting the U.S. Government to provide financial and other support for the deployment and maintenance of the West African peacekeeping force then known as ECOMOG, among others.

Ambassador Sulunteh noted that the Liberian people will forever be grateful to Dr. Height and those who struggled and advocated over the years to bring an end to the state of death and destruction that prevailed in Liberia, a once beautiful and promising country.

The Citation from President Sirleaf to Dr. Height for the “Conferral of the Distinction of Commander in the Order of the Star of Africa (Posthumously),” expresses gratitude for the “remarkable and impactful difference you have made in the lives of millions through the lifetime of selfless service and visionary leadership.” The Citation was read by Ms. DeContee Clements, Assistant to the Ambassador for Diaspora Affairs.

The Citation further states: “Therefore, in consideration of your enormous contribution to the civil rights movement, the rights of women worldwide, your contributions to the betterment of humanity and your untiring dedication during the six decades of public life as a dream giver, earth shaker and crusader for human rights, I Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, by virtue of the authority in me vested as Grand Master of the Orders of Distinction of the Republic of Liberia, do hereby admit you, Dorothy Irene Height,



posthumously, into the Order of the Star of Africa and confer upon you the grade of Commander.” Also speaking at the occasion, Mrs. Vivian Lowery Derryck, President and CEO of the Bridges Institute, expressed profound gratitude to President Sirleaf, the Government and people of Liberia for the recognition of Dr. Height.

Mrs. Lowery-Derryck, who was once closely associated with Dr. Height, spoke of many similarities between President Sirleaf and Dr. Height, and how they both have positively impacted the world through their contributions for the betterment of humanity.

Ms. Alyce Walker, Chief Administrative Officer of the NCNW and Ms. MacKenzie Walker, Vice Chair of the NCNW also made separate remarks. Both of them thanked the President and Government of Liberia for the honored conferred upon Dr. Height, and reechoed the need for continued effort to improve the conditions of all human beings.

Other Embassy officials and personnel at the event were Hon. Jeff G. Dowana, Deputy Chief of Mission, Hon. Gabriel I.H. Williams, Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs; Mr. Doliakeh Quويمie, First Secretary for Financial and Consular Affairs; Ms. Catherine Nmah, Second Secretary and Vice Consul; and Mrs. Cecelia Harmon-Rogers, Administrator. To view more photographs of this event, ([click Here](#))====> [1]

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