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## THE WOODSON LAUNCHES “INVEST IN BLACK HISTORY” CAMPAIGN

### *The Woodson Museum announces \$1 million private investment and issues a challenge to the community to invest in Black History*

**St. Petersburg, FL** – Earlier today, The Woodson, alongside significant donors, including corporations, held a press conference to unveil the “Invest in Black History” campaign and to challenge the community to join their commitment. This was followed by the raising of The Woodson Flag at St. Petersburg City Hall to celebrate the start of Black History Month.

The Woodson also proudly announces the largest private investment in the capital campaign to expand the museum – a \$1 million gift by the Milkey Family Foundation. The Milkey Family Foundation was started by Kevin and Jeanne Milkey to further their charitable giving to the community.

The donation by Milkey Family Foundation is the largest private gift received to date. This comes in addition to \$1.2 million given by the City of St. Petersburg, which has also pledged to provide land for the new museum, with the land deal still working toward finalization. In addition to these significant gifts, many other donors and corporations have stepped forward to support the expansion of The Woodson.

While museums are often viewed as a place to store history and artifacts, The Woodson brings alive African American History for our community. Recently, the museum was the host of a special virtual swearing-in ceremony, celebrating the first Black mayor elected to lead the City of St. Petersburg, Florida. The Woodson demonstrates how we can learn from history, experience history, and make history.

The presentation, celebration, and experience of African American history is a year-round commitment for The Woodson and its supporters. The community is stepping forward to help with the expansion to the new museum, but it will take a complete community effort to invest in this effort. Individuals, sororities, fraternities, companies, and governments are invited to celebrate Black History Month committing to the importance of Black History by investing in The Woodson. To provide support, visit <https://woodsonmuseum.org>.

Due to the growth in importance and popularity of The Woodson, its mission has outgrown its current single-story 4,000 square foot facility. Plans and fundraising for a new museum building, which is planned for 30,000 square feet, are underway. This museum expansion is the result of many focus groups, community discussions, and one-on-one engagements with stakeholders held by the museum’s leadership. The community’s involvement helped guide the project plans, ensuring it is rooted in history and culture while preparing to meet the needs of future generations. **The new museum will be the first newly constructed landmark museum in the State of Florida dedicated to celebrating African American history, art, and culture.**

The Woodson's mission to preserve, present, and interpret African American history and culture has garnered a broad audience, including community partners, members, volunteers, and friends. The Woodson brings individuals together from all walks of life, serving as a bridge and gateway for safe, constructive, and meaningful discussions regarding history, culture, race, equity, and empowerment. The museum inspires and enlightens people who seek to learn more about the rich untold or rarely celebrated stories and contributions of African Americans.

In addition to the annual flag-raising ceremony and kick-off of the Invest in Black History Campaign, The Woodson will also celebrate Black History Month with the unveiling of a newly commissioned portrait of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the museum's namesake, and the father of African American History. This special commission was made possible by a donor with a matching gift from her company.

The Woodson's acclaimed *REVERBERATIONS: Black Artists on Racism and Resilience* continues its tour this month at the Hillsborough Community College Gallery 221, after being hosted by both The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art and the Scarfone/Hartley Gallery at the University of Tampa. The community is invited to invest in Black History, through visiting The Woodson's exhibitions and programming like *REVERBERATIONS* and the upcoming *Hero of a Thousand Faces: Showcasing the Stories and Contributions of Black Men*. Investment in the significant expansion of the museum will soon allow the museum the opportunity to host such world-class exhibits in its own space.

### **The Woodson**

Since its opening in 2006, The Woodson has maximized its modest 4,000 square foot space, providing some of the most robust African American history programming in the Southeast United States. Before the opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture, The Woodson was named one of the 17 "must-see" museums in the nation. Today, the museum serves as a bridge and gateway for safe, constructive, and meaningful discussions regarding history, culture, race, equity, and empowerment, bringing individuals together from all walks of life. The new and expanded location for The Woodson will serve as an anchor for the revitalization of St. Petersburg's 22nd Street, the area dubbed "The Deuces" after its double 2s, the heart of a vibrant and prosperous African American community during the time of segregation, a hub of Black businesses, homes, and entertainment on St. Pete's South Side.

**Press Conference, B-roll, images, and a copy of this release are available at:**

**<https://bit.ly/investinblackhistory>**