



NEWS RELEASE

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FACES OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM Exhibit Opening Honoring Ukrop's/First Market Bank

Richmond, Virginia (September 19, 2007) - The Council for America's First Freedom is unveiling their first exhibit in their newly renovated buildings at 1321 East Main Street, on Wednesday, September 19, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. Ukrop's/First Market Bank generously funded the exhibit, titled "*Faces of Religious Freedom*," and Mr. Jim Ukrop will be duly honored and will ceremoniously open the exhibit. Commenting on the exhibit during a recent visit, Mr. Ukrop said, "It is gratifying to see this evocative exhibit about religious freedom come to fruition. An important happening took place in Richmond in 1786 with the signing of the Virginia Statute. This exhibit imparts a living legacy that we all can be proud of, not only in our city, but in the entire Commonwealth of Virginia."

Faces of Religious Freedom explores the lives and deeds of individuals who have helped define the concept of religious freedom. The exhibit is presented in five thematic components:

- 1) The *Courageous Visionaries* who forged a radical path for the future. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison stand above the exhibit marveling at the developments in religious freedom that ensued across the nation and the world following the passage of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.
- 2) To their left is the second component, *Clash of Cultures*, which pointedly illustrates how religious freedom in America remains today an area of active growth and controversy. The faces of Jerry Falwell, Billy Graham, Sun Myung Moon, and Madalyn Murray O'Hair tell this story.

3) As you move along the wall, the billboards of the nameless faces illustrate the story of religious freedom as it takes shape in the lives of ordinary people around the world; the anguish, joy, liberation, and the reverence of religious observance. Then you come to the third component, *Building the American Dream*, a snapshot of the faces that tell the story of how religious freedom for white Protestants became, through waves of successive immigration and through civil rights reform, first religious freedom for Catholics, Protestants and Jews, and then religious freedom for African-Americans and women.

4) The fourth section of the exhibit, *Wars and Rumors of Wars*, we see that even as religious freedom has been recognized as an international human right, blood continues to be shed beyond the United States over religious differences. Terrorism, fears of the "other", and the categorical thinking that arise from these, stand in the way of our humanitarian goal of a peaceful and free religious pluralism.

5) The ultimate test of religious freedom, the treatment of religious minorities, is the fifth and final component. In this section, *Testing the Principles*, five examples are presented that illustrate how the Constitutional protection of religious freedom has stretched, grown and evolved. This section looks at faces within the Amish, Muslim, Christian Scientist, Hassidic Jewish and Latter-day Saints communities.

The exhibit is located in an interactive conference space that will allow audiences to explore the virtual web exhibit and to engage with the issues that underlie religious freedom.

Two extraordinary musicians, Ms. Jenny Oaks Baker, famed concert violinist of the National Symphony Orchestra, accompanied by Mr. Russell Wilson, renowned concert pianist of the Richmond Symphony will perform for the celebration. Ms. Baker is the daughter of Dallin Oaks, one of the Faces of Religious Freedom.

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*Biographies and photos of the exhibit are attached.

About the Council for America's First Freedom

The guarantee of religious freedom first achieved legal and constitutional recognition through the work of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Mason. Their joint efforts produced the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, a groundbreaking law passed in 1786 by the Virginia General Assembly. The Statute was the precursor to the religion clauses found in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The mission of the Council for America's First Freedom is to increase understanding and respect for religious freedom in diverse communities worldwide through education about this core human value: the freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

Our mission builds on this legacy that began in Richmond, Virginia, was included in our American Bill of Rights, and is now recognized as an international human right.

The Council is a politically and religiously neutral 501(c)(3) organization that provides educational outreach programs that encourage audiences worldwide to understand the beliefs of others, and to respect the right of religious freedom for all. For more information, visit: www.firstfreedom.org.