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LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER

— DISTRICT 10 —

****PRESS RELEASE****

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City Council Approves Ridley-Thomas Motion Accepting Donation of John Lewis Painting From Netflix



In commemoration of the civil rights icon, Councilmember Ridley-Thomas has facilitated a partnership, blessed unanimously by the City Council, that will allow the Los Angeles Public Library to accept a gift of a painting of the late Congressman John Lewis from Netflix.

In the wake of the deep civil unrest that gripped our nation last summer, Meg DeLoatch, the Creator and Executive Producer, and her fellow writers for the Netflix show, *Family Reunion*, began sharing painful stories related to racial profiling. Many of the story lines in *Family Reunion*, now in its second season, seek to recognize and share the diverse, multi-generational histories of Black lives.

Much of their storytelling was inspired by the late Congressman. From student, to revolutionary, to elder statesman, Congressman Lewis dedicated his life to continuously leading the charge for racial and social equity. For decades, he encouraged our nation's youth "to get into good trouble" and he modeled how to achieve it.

In remembrance of the late Congressman, a portrait of him, against the backdrop of the Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington D.C., will be featured in forthcoming *Family Reunion* episodes. The painting pays tribute to one of his last public appearances before his death, amid nationwide protests over the death of George Floyd, and will soon be on display at Los Angeles' Central Library.

"Because there was a John Lewis, there is the show *Family Reunion*. We try in every episode to reflect Mr. Lewis' legacy of integrity, dignity, humor, and of course, love of family and mankind," said Netflix's *Family Reunion*'s Creator and Showrunner, Meg DeLoatch.

"I thank Netflix for their honorable contribution to the Los Angeles Public Library. The opportunity to view his portrait in such a sacred public space will be a notable reminder of his life and work," said Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas. "His life offers important lessons for contemporary generations on how to confront racial violence and transform American democracy. To honor his legacy, we must all continue to get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America."

"We are honored to be gifted with this stunning painting of Congressman John Lewis, an icon of the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to his extraordinary legacy to social justice, Representative Lewis was a tireless advocate for libraries, recognizing their power to influence the communities they serve. Representative Lewis even had a personal connection with the Los Angeles Public Library - his wife, Lillian Miles Lewis, worked as a librarian at one of our branches in the early 1960s! We are truly honored to accept this gift," said Los Angeles' Central Library Director, Kren Malone.

Ironically, at the age of 16, John Lewis applied for a library card from the local Pike County Library in Troy, Alabama, but was refused because of his race. Sadly, he never returned to Pike County library until 40 years later, in 1998, for his own book signing for *Walking*

in the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement. In addition, his wife, Lillian Miles Lewis, received her Master of Library Sciences at USC and was an employee of the Los Angeles Public Library.

“The legacy and impact of John Lewis presents several lessons in our work to reimagine a more equitable Los Angeles. I continue to be inspired by his work and I am committed to doing my part to collectively advance racial and social equity,” stated Councilmember Ridley-Thomas.

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