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## **OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT**

### **STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF GENERAL COLIN POWELL**

**DETROIT** – Today we mourn the loss of one of the nation’s greatest soldiers and ultimately a grand statesman, General Colin Powell. From the streets of Harlem to the halls of the Pentagon, he was America’s first Black National Security Advisor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of State. He will long be remembered for his steadfastness on the battlefield and his dedication to democracy on the fields throughout our land. He was often referred to as the “reluctant warrior” because he didn’t believe military intervention should be the first solution to an international crisis. General Powell was the first keynote speaker that I had the privilege to host as President of the Detroit Branch NAACP Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner in May of 1993. He was a gentleman while at the same time a soldier dedicated to the defense of this nation.

He came into Detroit knowing a great deal about the Detroit Branch NAACP and its new president as he said, “*from East Grand Boulevard to East Africa.*” He was not afraid to speak truth to power and to admit when he had made a mistake. He regretted in his own words, declaring that there were “*weapons of mass destruction in Iraq,*” at the infamous speech before the United Nations. He did not succumb to the right-wing extremism of today’s Republican Party. He declared years ago that America should embrace immigrants, diversity, and cease and desist from the division and discrimination. He believed that kind of attitude and philosophy was unbecoming of a nation that many look to as the arsenal of democracy.

Our prayers go out to his family and friends. General Powell is gone in the physical sense, but his selflessness and wisdom will continue to live on in the spirit of those whom he leaves behind. In his own words, “*if you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception; it is a prevailing attitude.*” Thank you, General Colin Powell, for achieving excellence and always maintaining a prevailing attitude for justice, equity, and opportunity.

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