

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

51 Steps to Freedom® Awarded PNC Foundation Grant

First corporate grant to support DC historical immersion trail that advances understanding, unity and healing and spurs visitation to the Nation's Capital.

Washington DC—February 2024— “51 Steps to Freedom® (www.51stepstofreedom.org)” announced today that it has received a \$50,000 grant from PNC Foundation. The grant will help in the development of an augmented reality app, to accompany a citywide trail throughout Washington, DC that highlights important stories, people and locations of America’s shared quest for freedom and equality. This is the first corporate philanthropy grant 51 Steps has received.

“PNC is an institution with an almost 200-year history in our Nation’s Capital, and we believe deeply that we must support our community and customers,” said D. Jermaine Johnson, PNC regional president for Greater Washington and Virginia. “This grant underscores that commitment by helping promote the history of our city in an impactful way, shining a light on the dramatic stories of our city.”

Spanning eight miles, 51 Steps to Freedom trail is built on a sustainable economic model that will drive tourism and much needed revenue to the city. It combines history, storytelling, emerging technology, digital and traditional art, and music to inspire, educate, and tell the stories of the hidden figures and places in DC that continue to shape America’s journey for freedom and equality.

51 Steps to Freedom is a unique collection of museums, churches, meeting houses, burial grounds, slave quarters, parks, homes, gardens, and 51 historic stops (steps) that tell the story of America's quest for justice and democracy. The grant from PNC Foundation will provide support to help develop the augmented reality component for the trail.

“Our Nation’s Capital has always been the place for people to come together and exercise our First Amendment rights in peaceful and meaningful ways,” said H.H. Leonards, co-creator of 51 Steps to Freedom. “From the Women’s Suffrage Procession on March 3, 1913, to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August 1963 to The Million Man March October 16, 1995 — to today — our city's streets have paved the way for change, understanding, and healing. Now more than ever our country needs to be united as one.”

"Tourism and the creative economy are not just crucial for crafting a vibrant city and establishing a strong economic base for essential services, but also offer a unique opportunity to travel and understand our similarities, celebrate our differences, and appreciate diverse cultures and ethnic groups from a global perspective." — Elliott L. Ferguson, president & CEO, Destination DC. and founding partner of 51 Steps to Freedom.

About PNC Foundation: The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual \$500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

About 51 Steps to Freedom: 51 Steps to Freedom is the Washington DC based non-profit (501c3) organization that is championing the creation of the first of its kind historical immersion trail that advances understanding, unity, and healing in our nation. We inspire, educate, and tell the stories of the hidden figures and places in our nation's capital that are the foundation of America's continuing journey toward freedom and equality. Part of Washington DC Mayor Bowser's Build Back Better initiative, this effort is an economic driver of visitation to the District which generates tax revenue to revitalize the Nation's Capital. Co-Chairs of 51 Steps are Mayor Muriel Bowser and Congresswoman Eleanor Norton Holmes. More information is available at: 51StepsToFreedom.org

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