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PRESS RELEASE

SIGNS OF THE TIMES™: HARLEM MARKERS PROJECT COMMEMORATES REGINA ANDERSON ANDREWS

First African American Librarian to Head New York Public Library Branch

Harlem, New York, April 24, 2024 – The first dedication of the 2024 SIGNS OF THE TIMES™: Harlem Markers Project by While We Are Still Here (WWSH) will take place on May 4, 2024, at the Washington Heights Library located at 1000 St. Nicholas Avenue. The event will commemorate the impactful work of Regina Andrews who began her New York Public Library career in 1923 at the 135th Street branch amid the Harlem Renaissance and was named the head of the 115th Street Library in 1938. She was the first African American librarian to head a New York Public Library branch. Beneficiaries of her work included literary luminaries such as Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen. Andrews retired after heading the Washington Heights branch for many years. Founded in 2015, WWSH works to educate, enshrine, and preserve the extraordinary legacy of Harlem as an influential incubator that was vital to the intellectual, cultural, social, and political advancements of the Harlem community as well as the African Diaspora.

The event will be attended by Andrews' great niece and nephew Regina Gibson-Broome and Anthony Turner, as well as Priscilla Basset, a retired librarian who worked under Ms. Andrews' supervision in the Washington Heights branch. Dr. Ethelene Whitmire, professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and author of the biography titled *Regina Anderson Andrews: Harlem Renaissance Librarian*, will speak about the librarian's life via a Zoom presentation.

Following the presentation, children will be treated to activities and giveaways of books supplied by First Book Marketplace, a nonprofit organization dedicated to removing barriers to equitable education for all children. The book distribution was made possible through the generosity of the New York Life Foundation. The books will be distributed while supplies last.

"New York Life Foundation has been pleased to partner with While We Are Still Here over the last three years to fund the remarkable Harlem Markers Project in recognition of 25 pioneers from the Harlem community. Honoring the legacy of Regina Anderson Andrews underscores our ongoing commitment to preserving Harlem's rich heritage," said Heather Nesle, President, New York Life Foundation. "Through community markers and children's books highlighting African American luminaries, we ensure future generations are inspired by the vibrant history of Harlem. We're also excited to have members of New York Life's Black Organization for Leadership and Development (BOLD) employee resource group volunteering at the event as well."

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“Ms. Anderson Andrews served as a catalyst for Black voices in a crucial time in our history,” said Karen D. Taylor, Founder and Executive Director of While We Are Still Here, the organization behind the SIGNS OF THE TIMES initiative. She added “it is befitting that we pay tribute to her spirit at this time, when there is more attention being paid to the Harlem Renaissance.” ([See Ms. Taylor’s bio here.](#))

Anyone interested in attending the May 4th event can [register for free here](#).

While We Are Still Here, Inc., a heritage-preservation organization, founded in 2015, announces the 2024 installations of 25 heritage markers as part of their **SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Harlem Markers Project**. The goal of this initiative is to honor individuals, organizations and events that imbue Harlem with its unique character.

Five of the 24 markers were unveiled in August and September of 2023 and the remaining dedications will take place in 2024. Some of the markers will honor individuals who made a significant contribution to the community and other markers will represent memorable moments or impactful movements.

[Link to Lift Ev’ry Voice press release](#)

[Link to Coleman Hawkins press release](#)

The SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Harlem Markers Project is made possible by the generous support of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and New York Life.

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About While We Are Still Here: A community-based organization founded in 2015 and committed to the safeguarding and celebration of Harlem’s history and culture. Its mission is to educate, enshrine and preserved the extraordinary legacy of Harlem as an influential incubator vital to the intellectual, cultural, social, and political advancements of the Harlem community and the African Diaspora.

For more information log onto www.harlemnyc.org