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For Immediate Release

Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Task Force Uncovers Rare MLK Photo and Bloody Tuesday Video

[Tuscaloosa, Ala.] A rare photograph showing the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Tuscaloosa's First African Baptist Church and a brief video of the events during Bloody Tuesday at the church have been uncovered by the Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Task Force.

The photo of Dr. King shows him giving a sermon at the pulpit of First African Baptist Church during the Installation Service of the Rev. T.Y. Rogers Jr. Taken on March 9, 1964, by photographer Edward Jenkins – one of the few African American photographers who covered the movement -- this photograph is the only known visual evidence of Dr. King in Tuscaloosa during this momentous occasion. Rev. T.Y. Rogers Jr. was recommended by Dr. King to serve as pastor of FABC and during his tenure (1964-1971) served on the Tuscaloosa Citizens for Action Committee. It was Reverend Rogers who also attempted to lead a group of protestors on a march from the church to the Tuscaloosa County Courthouse to protest segregated restrooms and drinking fountains. This peaceful march never began, however, as it turned into what is now called "Bloody Tuesday" as participants were harassed, beaten, and arrested by local police. The FABC was also tear-gassed with members still inside the church.

The Tuscaloosa Civil Rights Task Force has now discovered a rare video of this day's events. Archival footage from Huntley Film Archives in the United Kingdom shows the use of force by the police, sheriffs, and fire departments against the marchers with tear gas being dispersed, and the use of water hoses. The silent film also documents the arrest of Rev. T.Y. Rogers Jr.

These two important pieces of Tuscaloosa's Civil Rights history are imperative in telling the complete story of the city's involvement in the movement. The Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Task Force, formed in 2016, has been collecting stories, interviews, photographs, and memorabilia as it culminates this information to form the Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Trail. The Trail will comprise three separate districts; the first of which centers around the events of the Bloody Tuesday march that took place in downtown Tuscaloosa in 1964.

“The recent acquisitions of a photograph of Dr. King at First African Baptist Church and the news clip of Bloody Tuesday, join the ‘Stand in the Schoolhouse Door’ as confirmation of Tuscaloosa's rightful inclusion in Alabama civil rights history. Together they witness the honest account of a painful past, and concurrently offer the hope of insight and reconciliation for a better future,” states Scott Bridges, president of the Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Task Force.

To view the video of Bloody Tuesday or the image of Dr. King at First African Baptist Church, or for more information on the Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Task Force, visit their website at civilrightstuscaloosa.org or follow them on Facebook @TuscaloosaCivilRightsTrail.

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