

"Civil Rights Movement in Augusta" exhibit now open to public

MEMORIES OF A MOVEMENT

By [Travis Highfield](#)

Staff Writer

[Sunday, June 1, 2014 8:01 PM](#)

The museum opened its latest exhibit, "The Civil Rights Movement in Augusta, Ga.," on Sunday. It will run through Aug. 30.

"The purpose is to look at civil rights as it was in the 1960s and at the accomplishments they made," said Christine Miller-Betts, the museum's executive director. "The people – African-Americans and some whites – made tremendous contributions to get rid of Jim Crow (laws) here in Augusta."

The exhibit displays photographs and keepsakes of important figures in Augusta's civil rights movement and of black leaders who served as firsts in their fields.

One exhibit contained a tie and pair of cuff links worn by the late Ed McIntyre, who became Augusta's first black mayor in 1981. Another shared the biography of Richard A. Dent, the first black man from Richmond County since Reconstruction elected to the Georgia House.

Exhibits also tied national movements back to the Augusta area. A framed clipping of *The Augusta Chronicle* announced that 24 Augustans had boarded a train on their way to take part in the march on Washington alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Another clipping announced that King would speak at Augusta's Tabernacle Baptist Church in March 1962.

"Augusta is often overlooked when you talk about civil rights in a general sense," said museum historian Corey Rogers. "When you see documentaries on civil rights, you'll see them talk about Dr. King. It talks about Alabama and other places, but not Augusta. I think this exhibit is unique because it looks at what happened here and at some of the major players."

Charles Smith Sr., the president of the Augusta branch of the NAACP, said such exhibits are important not just for those who were alive during the time period, but also for the youth who weren't around to witness it.

"We should never forget the labor of civil rights leaders and the community leaders," he said. "That's important to pay respect to the legacy of those who made it happen and for our young people who need to be educated more about the contributions that were made during the struggle."

On June 18, Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham will deliver a lecture at the museum on the civil rights movement in Georgia. The event starts at 7 p.m. and costs \$10.