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**Architect Named for Atlanta's Center for Civil and Human Rights**  
*Esteemed Jury Selects The Freelon Group and HOK Based on Preliminary Design*

**ATLANTA** (March 26, 2009) – The Freelon Group, a Research Triangle, N.C.-based architecture and design firm, has been selected as the winner of a design competition for the new Center for Civil & Human Rights (CCHR) in Atlanta. Under the leadership of Philip Freelon, FAIA, The Freelon Group will partner with HOK, an Atlanta-based architecture and design firm, as the Center's Architect of Record. The announcement comes on the heels of a multi-month competitive design process in which dozens of firms worldwide competed for the contract. The Freelon Group and HOK will work with Center leadership, exhibit designer Gallagher & Associates and project manager Cousins Properties/Gude Management Group to finalize the facility's design prior to breaking ground on the \$125 million, 100,000 square foot Center this winter.

The final five teams presented their designs to more than 700 members of the public on March 5 and 6 with feedback collected on the CCHR web site [www.cchrpartnership.org](http://www.cchrpartnership.org). Taking into account building functionality, aesthetics, cost, and public feedback, a jury of design experts and community leaders made a recommendation to the CCHR board of directors, who made the final selection. The jury of 12 included: civil rights activist Andrea Young, community leader Mtamanika Youngblood, theater and film director George Wolfe, Executive Director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Sara Bloomfield, architect and Yale University professor Deborah Berke, and Atlanta Architect Craig VanDevere.

**THE SELECTED DESIGN**

The winning design is inspired by "the simple yet powerful image of interlocking arms that signifies the linkages that empower individuals and groups of seemingly divergent interests to find common ground," said Philip Freelon, president of The Freelon Group. The design, conceived with sustainability as a primary consideration, features a terracotta-clad building surrounding an exterior courtyard, which serves as an amphitheater and exhibit space. The King Papers exhibit, which extends towards Auburn Avenue, is a reminder that non-violence triumphs over bigotry and brutality, and a special events space overlooks the Ellipse at Pemberton Place.



The Freelon Group is noted for their work on the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore (opened 2005), the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) in San Francisco (opened 2005), and the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts and Culture in Charlotte (opening Fall 2009).

“We were incredibly impressed with the level of thought and emotion put into all five designs, which made it very difficult to choose just one design. However, The Freelon Group and HOK exceeded the criteria we set forth for the project’s design and truly captured the spirit of exploration and collaboration that is central to the Center’s mission,” said Doug Shipman, executive director for the Center.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Since March 2008, when the Center confirmed its 501(c)3 nonprofit status, the Center has progressed along an aggressive development timeline. This timeline is driven by many factors, including the desire to capture first-person stories from the unsung heroes of the Civil and Human Rights movement while they are still living. To meet a 2012 open date, the Center continues its public engagement efforts to further awareness of its mission and increase community involvement.

A recent donation from Atlanta’s corporate community will also help the Center reach its goal. Early this year, The Home Depot gave customers the chance to contribute to the Build the Dream campaign, commemorating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The company offered a campaign gift card in its stores and matched 5% of the total that customers put on their gift cards. The Home Depot Foundation today announced a donation of \$430,000 to the Center as a result of more than 65,000 gift card purchases as part of the Build the Dream campaign.

Shipman added, “We are thankful for the support Atlanta’s corporate community has put behind this project. Today’s donation announcement gives us a lot of momentum toward reaching our fundraising goal, and we hope this announcement will encourage other corporations and individuals to support our efforts through similar contributions.”

## **ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta will commemorate the landmark contributions of Atlantans and Georgians to the historic struggle for African-American freedom and equality as well as present the continuing story of human rights efforts around the world. The Center will be a space for ongoing dialogue, study and potential resolution of current and future freedom struggles for all people, at the local, national and international levels. For more information, please visit [www.cchrpartnership.org](http://www.cchrpartnership.org).

## **SUGGESTED PHOTO CAPTION**

The winning design by Freelon Group of Durham, N.C. and HOK of Atlanta was inspired by the powerful image of linked arms and conceived with sustainability as a primary consideration. The design features a terracotta-clad building surrounding an exterior courtyard, which serves as an amphitheater and exhibit space.

*Photo courtesy of the Center for Civil and Human Rights.*

## **PHOTOS AVAILABLE**

For images of the winning design, contact Tiffani Thomas at 404-419-9341 or [tthomas@jacksonspalding.com](mailto:tthomas@jacksonspalding.com).

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