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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Milwaukee Women Recognized in National Exhibit of Female African American Leaders

MILWAUKEE (Sept. 24, 2012) – Three Milwaukee women are featured in a national exhibit that honors African American women who have made significant contributions to the country. Gwen Jackson, Martha Love and Vel Phillips are profiled in “Sisters of Freedom: African American Women Moving Us Forward” that debuts at Mount Mary College on Thursday, Sept. 27 at 5:30 p.m.

The “Sisters of Freedom” exhibit is free and open to the public through Dec. 14 and is located in the college’s Patrick and Beatrice Haggerty Library, second level, 2900 N. Menomonee River Parkway.

Through pictures and short biographies, “Sisters of Freedom” highlights 34 female leaders and their work and contributions to society and the country. The exhibit was curated by the Syracuse Cultural Workers and features select African American women from the 1800’s to present. “Sisters of Freedom” provides a dramatic glimpse of the power and passion of women who transformed their lives and the country.

The Milwaukee women profiled are known for a variety of accomplishments:

- Gwen Jackson is an early childhood education advocate and longtime community volunteer. She was involved in the leadership of the American Red Cross at a chapter, regional and national level and in 2007 was recognized for 50 years of volunteer service to the organization. In 2009, MPS’ Twenty-first Street School was renamed the Gwen T. Jackson Early Childhood and Elementary School.
- Martha Love is a long-time community activist, political organizer and labor leader in Milwaukee. Love was a union representative who fought hard to ensure equal treatment of African American employees, as well as other people of color.
- Vel Phillips broke color barriers throughout Wisconsin. In 1951, she was the first African American woman to graduate from the University of Wisconsin - Madison law school. In 1956, Phillips became the first woman and the first African American member of Milwaukee’s Common Council and later was appointed to the Milwaukee County judiciary, making her the first African American judge in Wisconsin.

On Thursday, Sept. 27 at 5:30 p.m., Mount Mary will host a special presentation to unveil the exhibit. The event includes a guest appearance by Erin Goseer Mitchell, a celebrated author whose compelling book, *Born Colored, Life before Bloody Sunday*, delivers poignant insights about her life as a child growing up in the segregated South before the Civil Rights Movement. Mitchell is also one of the 34 women profiled in the exhibit.

In addition to Mitchell, Jackson, Love and Phillips, other women recognized include:

- Rosa Parks - the mother of the modern day Civil Rights Movement
- Alice Walker – a Pulitzer-prize winning author, poet and activist
- Marian Wright Edelman - founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund
- Shirley Chisholm - the first black congresswoman
- Harriet Tubman – an African-American abolitionist, humanitarian and the most well-known of all the Underground Railroad’s conductors
- Fannie Lou Hamer – an American voting rights activist and civil rights leader

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Mount Mary College, founded in 1913 by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, was Wisconsin’s first four-year, degree-granting Catholic college for women. Located on an 80-acre campus in Milwaukee, the College offers more than 30 undergraduate majors for women and eight graduate programs for women and men. Mount Mary also emphasizes study abroad, service learning, and social justice initiatives. Its nearly 1900 students enjoy small class sizes (average 14) and over 90 percent of full-time students receive financial aid or scholarships. Through classroom instruction and community service, Mount Mary develops women to be leaders in their professions and their communities, serving as role models to inspire achievement in others. Visit Mount Mary at www.mtmary.edu.

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