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The Booth Museum Celebrates Black History Month with Buffalo Soldiers Featured in Ken Freeman Art Exhibition

- The Kenneth M. Freeman Legacy Exhibition - 'Artist at Work'

Atlanta, GA – Displayed in the recreation of the artist's studio are his works of the Buffalo Soldiers. The exhibition consists of fifty (50) oil paintings and sculptures that feature working cowboys and cowgirls, rodeo heroes,

Native American elders and children, mountain men, Western landscapes, and Buffalo Soldiers.
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The Booth Western Art Museum, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, opened the Kenneth M. Freeman Legacy Exhibition – 'Artist at Work' in January 2010. Knowing the display would carry into Black History Month, the exhibition also highlights a number of educational features that include a re-creation of Ken Freeman's studio complete with easel and artifacts, a section on Ken Freeman, the illustrator, showcasing a display of book covers and posters including 'Fallon' by Louis L'Amour, and a special section on the Buffalo Soldiers (<http://www.9thcavalry.com>). The exhibition is open through May 22, 2010.

The Kenneth M. Freeman Legacy Exhibition opening on the Martin Luther King weekend celebration held a special significance because of the Buffalo Soldiers display.

"During the late 1800's and early 1900s, the Buffalo Soldiers were assigned to the harshest and most desolate posts. The Buffalo Soldiers fought the Indian Wars of the American West and established frontier outposts which have since become towns," explained Bonnie Adams, curator of the Kenneth M. Freeman Legacy. "Ken was an honorary Captain in the 9th Memorial U.S. Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers and his paintings and sculptures of the Buffalo Soldiers are compelling works."

Included in the Buffalo Soldiers Exhibit are a regiment flag, Ken's uniform, photographs, pencil sketches, underpaintings, artifacts, finished paintings and sculpture.

William "Bill" McCurtis, president and Regimental Sergeant Major of the 9th Memorial U.S. Cavalry feels that Ken Freeman had the true spirit of the Buffalo Soldier in him.

"He was one of the rare people that realized that although in the document authorizing the forming of the all-black regiments, in 1866, stating that the Officers must be white, the all-white officers were just as much Buffalo Soldiers as the troops they commanded," McCurtis said. "When Ken painted, he brought this spirit out in his subjects."

"Ken felt a special bond with the story of the Buffalo Soldiers and felt it needed to be told," adds McCurtis.

"The Kenneth Freeman Legacy Exhibition represents a true working artist," said Seth Hopkins, executive director of the Booth Western Art Museum. "The exhibition shows the artist at work ... as an illustrator, sculptor, and painter. The Booth Museum has two of Ken's paintings in our permanent collection."

In addition to Freeman's display of Buffalo Soldiers commemorating Black History month is an exhibit by local Georgia artist Ernest Varner. On Thursday, February 18, 2010 at 7:00 pm in the Booth Theatre using the images from his exhibition The Longest Mile, Varner will describe why he became interested in portraying the history of African Americans in the West. He will be joined on the program by Jim "Hank" Scott a long-time researcher and Buffalo Soldier re-enactor. Scott will describe the heroic efforts of the Buffalo Soldiers.

"We now house the largest permanent exhibition space for Western art in the country," added Hopkins. "We say: You don't have to leave the South to visit the West."

Also included in the exhibition will be an area focusing on Ken's artistic technique.

"Ken painted each work three times. First he sketched on the canvas or board with pencil and then did a full value, burnt umber painting where he worked out all the values. When the burnt umber was dry, he laid down the color," added Adams-Freeman. "This was the style of the old masters and members of the press dubbed Ken Freeman The Rembrandt of the Rodeo."

About Kenneth M. Freeman

Works of Kenneth M. Freeman are in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Museum, Library of Congress, American Art Academy, and Booth Museum as well as distinguished private collections. Accolades include winning competitions at the San Diego Museum of Art, the Hubbard Museum of Art, the Illinois State Fair, the Salmagundi Show in New York City, the Union League Club of Chicago, being chosen five times as artist for the Parada Del Sol Rodeo in Scottsdale, AZ and having a painting selected for the 1988 Prescott Centennial Rodeo. He was an illustrator for authors like Louis L'Amour.

Ken was known affectionately as "Rembrandt of the Rodeo" by members of the press. First Lady Barbara Bush, impressed with Ken Freeman's southwestern art, invited him to show at the Smithsonian Institute in conjunction with the Native American Museum Extravaganza. Ken also had a one man show in 2007 in Milan, Italy at Fondazione Metropolitan. www.KennethMFreeman.com

For artist Kenneth M. Freeman, the cowboy hat and boots was not a gimmick or shtick. Neither was his Arizona attitude. Ken Freeman may have grown up in a traditional Jewish home in Chicago, Illinois but make no mistake ... he was a cowboy.

About the Buffalo Soldiers

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Buffalo Soldiers were assigned to the harshest and most desolate posts. Specific duties included subduing Mexican revolutionaries, outlaws, commancheros, rustlers and hostile Native Americans. Additional administrative duties included exploring and mapping the Southwest, and establishing frontier outposts for future towns. (<http://www.9thcavalry.com>).

The Buffalo Soldiers fought in the Indians Wars of the American West, Spanish American War of 1898, WWI and WWII. The Buffalo Soldier Motto: "WE CAN: WE WILL" Their adversary, whether Indians, outlaws, Mexican revolutionaries, or gun smugglers, found that the Buffalo Soldiers, like their namesake, could not easily be diverted from their trail. Whatever the reason for the name, the Buffalo Soldier has come down in American military history as one of the proudest individuals of all.

About The Booth Western Art Museum

(HighRes Image: http://www.boothmuseum.org/images/Back%20entrance_highres.pdf)

For more information on the Kenneth M. Freeman Legacy Exhibition – 'Artist at Work, call Tara Currier, director of marketing, the Booth Museum at 770-387-1300 or visit www.boothmuseum.org. While it is outside of Atlanta (only 45 minutes), this art exhibition makes a compelling destination event for art lovers within driving distance to metro-Atlanta.

The Booth Western Art Museum is a 120,000 square foot museum where guests are invited to explore the American West through contemporary Western artwork. The Museum also houses a Presidential Gallery, Civil War art gallery, and Sagebrush Ranch children's gallery. It is located a short drive from Atlanta up I-75 to Exit #288.

The Booth Western Art Museum Permanent Collection: Kenneth M. Freeman

Shootout at Tombstone He Rides Shotgun

<http://tinyurl.com/yal63jo> <http://tinyurl.com/yfezley>

MEDIA RESOURCES:

HD Digital B-Roll footage is available of the Artist at Work exhibition at the Booth Museum. You can preview the video footage at <http://www.KennethMFreeman.com/press.htm>

HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES:

1. Buffalo Soldier: Sergeant Major William McCurtis (JPG 2.7 MB)

<http://www.KennethMFreeman.com/press/SgtMajorBill.jpg>

2. Booth Museum Installation of Artist at Work (TIF 5.5MB)

<http://www.KennethMFreeman.com/press/boothinstallation.tif>

3. Impending Decision – Freeman's most famous painting (JPG 3.8 MB)

<http://www.KennethMFreeman.com/press/ImpendingDecision.jpg>

4. Tough Draw – the official image of the "Artist at Work" exhibition (JPG 2.7 MB)

<http://www.KennethMFreeman.com/press/ToughDraw.jpg>

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Documents and/or Photos available for this release:

Sgt. Major Bill, by artist Kenneth M. Freeman (1935-2008) from the Kenneth M. Freeman Legacy: Artist at Work collection.

To view supporting documents and/or photos, go to www.enr-corp.com/pressroom and enter Release ID: 242508