



## **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad and Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monuments: Supporting Comments**

***Lawrence Selzer, President and CEO, The Conservation Fund***

“One hundred years after her death, we still look to Harriet Tubman as an American symbol of heroism, equality, justice and self-determination. President Obama’s designation of a national monument honoring her life and legacy is a testament to Harriet’s courageous efforts and the dedicated work of so many to preserve the landscape where she made her mark on history. The Conservation Fund is thrilled to facilitate the protection and donation of a significant property to the National Park Service for the new monument designation in her honor.”

***Sylvia Cyrus, Executive Director, Association for the Study of African American Life & History (ASALH)***

“The Association for the Study of African American Life & History (ASALH) expresses its great appreciation for the actions taken by President Obama today to protect and commemorate the legacies of Harriet Tubman and Colonel Charles Young by designating national monuments in their honor. The president’s use of the Antiquities Act adds two new sites to our National Park System that will enhance public understanding of and appreciation for the African American experience in the United States. Our founder Dr. Carter G. Woodson, whose home was made a part of the National Park System in 2006, is smiling today in approval of this long-anticipated step to honor two of America’s finest patriots and icons.”

***David Ofwono, President, Los Banos Buffalo Soldiers Association Board of Directors***

“The Los Banos Ninth and Tenth Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers Association would like to thank President Barack Obama for declaring the Colonel Charles Young home in Xenia, Ohio, a national monument. Colonel Young is a true American hero and an inspiration to all those who have dealt with and overcome adversity. The president’s use of the Antiquities Act is a long-anticipated, highly appropriate honor commensurate to the legacy of Colonel Charles Young; an officer, a gentleman, and a patriot.”

***Brian Shellum, Author of “Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment: The Military Career of Charles Young”***

"Charles Young was a trailblazer for his race in the U.S. Army, serving as a standard-bearer for African Americans in the officer corps for nearly thirty years. He was the third African American graduate of West Point, the first black superintendent of one of our national parks, the first African American military attaché, and the highest ranking black Regular Army officer until his death in 1922. Young deserves rescue from his historical obscurity and merits a place in America's pantheon of acknowledged military leaders."

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***Charles A. Wash, Jr., Ph.D, Director, National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center***

“As our institution is located in historic Wilberforce in the heart of Greene County, Ohio where Col. Young made his home, we are very excited and pleased that such an important Ohioan may be honored in such a significant way.”

“Col. Charles Young became one of the most important and prominent figures not only in African American history, but also American history; albeit he remains virtually unknown to many. His life and career is a clear reminder of what true patriotism is and how individuals can transform the world around them. The designation of Col. Young’s home as a national monument will not only bring to light such a remarkable figure whose life transcended race at a time when it was paramount in people’s mind, but it also acts to preserve a fundamentally important part of African American and American history.”

“With a renewed sense of hope for the fate of such an important symbol to the Wilberforce community, we envision a much brighter future than ever before. Because the home is surrounded by other very important institutions in the area including Central State University, Wilberforce University, Payne Theological Seminary and the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, a support structure for programs, visitation and research are already in place and readily available. There are enormous opportunities for collaboration and opportunities to preserve and present the uniquely African American story of Col. Young’s life that will be viewed as perfectly American. With our extensive and one-of-a-kind manuscript collections of material relating to Col. Young’s life and career, a much fuller and detailed story can be told.”

***Kate Clifford Larson, historian, curator and author, “Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero”***

"Harriet Tubman refused to be bound by the chains of slavery, or by the low expectations limiting the lives of women and African Americans. Struggling against amazing odds, and never wavering from her commitment to liberation and civil rights, Harriet Tubman fought for what we as Americans hold dear: freedom, equality, justice and self-determination. President Obama’s use of the Antiquities Act to designate a National Monument in Harriet Tubman’s honor finally places this true American patriot, rightfully among our nation’s most beloved heroes."

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