

For Immediate Release

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Social Justice Icon and Community Leader Dies

Reverend James L. Demus III, founder and co-director of the Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide, passed away on Thursday, September 23, 2010. He was in his late 50's.

As senior pastor of Park Manor Christian Church for the last 25 years, Reverend Demus's ministry and leadership grew the congregation into one of the largest African American churches in the Disciples of Christ denomination. He was a servant to the community and a shining beacon of hope to his many followers.

Reverend Demus's passion lied in advocating for the underserved. As the founder and co-director for the Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAADD), he created a 30,000+ member next generation civil rights organization that is devoted to bridging the Digital Divide and promoting personal and economic development in low-income and minority communities across the country. Under Reverend Demus's stewardship, the organization now has chapters in 6 states and advocates at the federal level for policies to empower underserved communities through the use of technology. His roots in social justice stem from his tenure as the executive director of the Chicago South Side Branch of the NAACP and his long time affiliation with Rainbow PUSH. Reverend Demus also was the chief organizer for the original Million Man March. He was a popular public speaker and a noted community organizer.

"Pastor Demus was not only a good friend of mine, he was a true mentor", said Reverend Roosevelt Watkins III, co-director of MAADD. "He was a person who had a knack for finding creative solutions to problems afflicting our communities and helping people better their lives. He was a vibrant personality that captivated any room that he walked into and his humor could brighten up the gloomiest of days. He fought the good fight, he kept the faith and he finished the course. He completed his job on Earth well and now he has been summoned home. Take your rest my friend."

As a voice for the voiceless and a drum major for justice, Reverend Demus had a vision to pull low income and minority communities out of economic despair and into a being a wealthy and powerful constituency. With this end game in mind, he started a movement that transcends him in death – a movement to transform the economic, social, political and cultural landscapes in our nation's minority communities. This effort will be carried on by MAADD as a part of his legacy.

Reverend Demus is survived by his wife, Eleanor, his two sons, Joshua Von Demus and James L. Demus IV, his three step children, Robyn L. Cushingberry, Marie C. Babb-Fowler and Lamont Sharp, and his four grandchildren, Anna J. Chapman-Demus, Candyce L. Black, Brittany Thompson and Andrew Babb-Fowler.

Funeral arrangements for Reverend Demus are as follows.

Date: Monday, September 27, 2010

Time: 12:00 p.m. – wake
1:00 p.m. - funeral

Location: Park Manor Christian Church
600 East 73rd Street
Chicago, IL 60619