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National Center for Civil and Human Rights Reopens with Major Expansion and New Galleries

On November 8, the Center opens its doors for a Community Celebration with music, family fun, and interactive tours. Be part of history as the museum reopens to the world.

ATLANTA (November 2025) – The National Center for Civil and Human Rights has reopened following a \$57.9 million expansion that fulfills the vision of its founders and strengthens its role as a national destination for education, reflection, and action.

Leaders and supporters gathered on November 4 for a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring Arthur M. Blank, former Mayor Shirley Clarke Franklin, Mayor Andre Dickens, Board Chair Egbert Perry, Co-Chair AJ Robinson, CEO Jill Savitt, and Juneau Construction CEO Nancy Juneau.

The reopening marks a defining moment for the Center, expanding its footprint by 24,000 square feet – to 65,000 square feet -- and transforming how visitors experience the ongoing story of courage and human rights in America and around the world. Two new wings, six new galleries, three classrooms, and interactive experiences connect the lessons of the past to the challenges of the present.

The expansion also doubles the Center's event-space capacity, with areas for classrooms, community gatherings, conferences, performances, and celebrations. The Franklin Pavilion's roof terrace offers sweeping skyline views—a symbolic reminder of the city's place at the heart of the civil rights movement and its continuing legacy of leadership.

"Our reopening arrives at a time when understanding our shared history feels more urgent than ever," said **Jill Savitt**, president and CEO of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. "This Center was built to show how history speaks to the present. These new galleries allow people to experience both the courage of those who came before us and the call to continue their work today."

Champions of the Center Reflect on Its Reopening

Arthur M. Blank, Chairman, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation

“I’ve always believed in the Center’s mission, in the lessons it teaches and the hope it inspires,” said Arthur M. Blank, Owner and Chairman Blank Family of Businesses. “Being part of this expansion is an honor for myself, my family and our Family Foundation, and we look forward to seeing the extraordinary work that will continue to shape our community and our future.”

Shirley Clarke Franklin, Former Mayor of Atlanta and Founding Visionary of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights

“When we originally opened the Center, we wanted history to live in the present. Seeing it reopen even stronger reminds me that Atlanta’s commitment to truth and justice continues to guide and inspire the world.”

The expansion honors two visionary Atlantans whose leadership made the Center possible. The **Shirley Clarke Franklin Pavilion** adds flexible classrooms, event space, and rooftop views of the city, while the **Arthur M. Blank Inspiration Hall** houses three new galleries, a café, and a museum store.

The Center’s updated and expanded galleries bring history to life in powerful new ways:

- **Rolls Down Like Water: The American Civil Rights Movement** – The Center’s signature gallery returns with new storytelling and updates that enhance one of the most powerful visitor experiences: the **Lunch Counter simulation**, where guests take a seat at the counter and experience the courage of protestors who faced hatred with calm resolve.
- **A Committed Life: The Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection** – This reimagined gallery features a rotating selection of Dr. King’s personal papers and writings. Visitors encounter Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as never before—as a man, a father, a pastor, and a leader whose humanity deepened his moral vision. In a new tradition, the Center will feature a guest curator for each rotation. The inaugural guest curator is **Rev Dr. Bernice A. King**, the youngest child for Dr. King and Coretta Scott King.
- **Everyone. Everywhere. The Global Human Rights Movement** – Highlights defenders and activists around the world and includes **A Mile in My Shoes**, an immersive installation where guests walk in others’ stories, encouraging empathy and connection.
- **Action Lab** – A hands-on space where visitors design personal civic engagement plans and find practical ways to make a difference in their own communities.

- **Special Exhibitions Gallery** – For the first time, the Center will have a gallery for temporary exhibitions, beginning with **Reclaiming History: Selections from the Tinwood Foundation**, featuring Southern Black artists whose work confronts injustice and celebrates resilience.
- **Broken Promises: The Legacy of the Reconstruction Era** – Opening on December 5, this gallery explores a chapter of US history that provides critical context for the Civil Rights Movement. This gallery includes artifacts from the **Without Sanctuary** collection and a memorial space featuring the marker for Mary Turner’s lynching with an interpretation by artist **Lonnie Holley**.

The reopening comes amid a national conversation about how history is told in museums. The National Center for Civil and Human Rights remains privately funded and steadfast in its mission to share a more complete and accurate story of civil rights history, human rights challenges today and ongoing efforts to protect dignity for all.

On November 8, the Center will host a Community Celebration inviting visitors of all ages to experience the new museum firsthand. The event will feature a **live radio broadcast by V-103 with Big Tigger**, music, kids’ activities, giveaways, and special guests. **With admission, visitors can explore the new galleries through free tours.** Guests are encouraged to reserve tickets early at civilandhumanrights.org for a day that promises inspiration, reflection, and the chance to be part of history.

“This reopening is more than a milestone,” Savitt said. “It’s an invitation—for people everywhere to get inspired and motivated to engage in civic life. History lives here, but its future depends on all of us.”

About the National Center for Civil and Human Rights

The National Center for Civil and Human Rights is a museum and cultural organization that inspires the changemaker in each of us. Opened in 2014, the Center connects US civil rights history to global human rights movements today. Our experiences highlight people who have worked to protect rights and who model how individuals create positive change. For more information, visit civilandhumanrights.org. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram [@civilandhumanrights](https://www.instagram.com/civilandhumanrights) and LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/ncchr](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ncchr).