



Croton-on-Hudson Commemorates **Lorraine Hansberry's 1963 Rally for Freedom**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(Croton-on-Hudson, NY) **The Lorraine Hansberry Coalition, with generous support from the Village of Croton-on-Hudson, NY, has organized a two-week, four-event 60th anniversary commemoration of the Rally to Support the Southern Freedom Movement, which Lorraine Hansberry organized and chaired at Temple Israel of Northern Westchester* on June 16, 1963. The event was a significant moment in local civil rights history. Hansberry, renowned author, playwright (*A Raisin in the Sun*) and civil rights activist, was a denizen of Croton in her final years and is buried there.**

All events are free, but space is limited. Participants must register for each one on Eventbrite at:

<https://tinyurl.com/LHCevent>.

1963 Rally to Support the Southern Freedom Movement: Over 1,000 people flocked to the small village of Croton-on-Hudson to hear task-force organizer [Jerome Smith](#) from the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.), give an eye-opening, first-hand report about the state of civil rights in Alabama and Mississippi. Besides Smith, other speakers like [Gene Young](#), who at the age of twelve was the second youngest Black American to have been arrested in Jackson, MS, gave emotional accounts from the front lines of the civil rights movement. Nearly a dozen representatives of various religious faiths joined two dozen others in sponsoring the event. [Judy Collins](#), new on the music scene, sang folk songs along with [Tom Glazer](#).

Thousands of dollars were raised to support the cause, and hundreds of people left the event with a new understanding about voter suppression in this county. Funds were used to bail protesters out of jail and to support boots-on-the-ground civil rights organizations. Some of the money went to purchase the station wagon that Freedom Summer activists [James Chaney](#), [Andrew Goodman](#), and [Michael Schwerner](#) were

driving in 1964 when they were captured and murdered for attempting to register Black Americans in Mississippi to vote.

KICKOFF EVENT, Sunday, June 11, 2023, from 2:00-5:00 pm, *Temple Israel of Northern Westchester, 31 Glengary Road, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

2023 Rally: This year's gathering and rally will be held at the original site. [Temple Israel of Northern Westchester](#) has a tradition of promoting social justice. Participants of all ages will connect to significant local civil rights history as they explore the importance of equality and voting rights in the 1960s and today.

The multi-media event will include special guests: Croton's [Mayor Brian Pugh](#) will introduce featured speaker [Mondaire Jones](#), U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and former congressman for NY's 17th district; acclaimed folk-jazz artist [KJ Denhert](#) will perform; [Dr. Carla J. DuBose-Simons](#), PhD, Assistant Professor of History at Westchester Community College, will address "The American Civil Rights Era and Voting Rights"; and [Professor Ed Ginsberg](#) from Temple Israel. Croton-Harmon High School students will premiere their short film of interviews with Croton residents who either attended the 1963 rally or interacted with Hansberry.

Supervised Children's Activities: Families can register their children, ages 4 to 10, for free, supervised [ArtsWestchester Arts Mobile](#) activities and reading circles from 2:00-4:00 pm at the event site.

Reflection and Refreshments: The event will finish with light refreshments served from 4:00-5:00 pm, giving attendees time to reflect on the afternoon and connect with one another.

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VOTING RIGHTS 2023: A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION, Wednesday, June 14 from 6:30-8:30 pm, Croton Yacht Club, 6 Elliot Way, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

In honor of the 60th Anniversary of [Lorraine Hansberry's](#) Rally in Support of the Southern Freedom Movement, the Lorraine Hansberry Coalition has organized a lively, in-person, social event to discuss the importance and power of voting. Light refreshments will be available.

[Noelle Damico](#), Director of Social Justice at The Workers Circle, will moderate the discussion touching on the history of voting rights, grass roots organizing, the impact of recent voting rights legislation and

what citizens can do to protect everyone's right to vote. Participants are invited to submit their thoughts and questions about voting when registering for the event, which is free.

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THIS FAR AND NO FURTHER, ARTIST TALK, PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION and BOOK SIGNING with WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ, Thursday, June 15, 2023, 6:30 to 8:00pm, Black Cow Coffee Co., 4 Old Post Road South, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

This event will provide a rare opportunity to meet with, and hear from, award-winning photographer [William Abranowicz](#).

Standing on Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, in 2017, the site of one of the civil rights movement's most defining episodes, 1965's "Bloody Sunday," Abranowicz was struck by the weight of historical memory. This experience inspired him to create and assemble a collection of affecting civil rights related images that became his book, *This Far and No Further*. Through stunning photographs of locations, landscapes, and individuals, he connects us with the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, which were the impetus for and aftermath of [Lorraine Hansberry's 1963 Rally for the Southern Freedom Movement](#), and its living legacy today. He also underscores the importance of protecting and exercising voting.

Abranowicz's book will be available at By-the-Dam Books store at the same location. The exhibition, will be on view from June 11-24 during Black Cow business hours: Sundays, 7:00-6:00pm; Mondays-Fridays, 5:30-5:00pm and Saturdays, 6:00am-6:00pm.

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SPECIAL SCREENING AND MODERATED DISCUSSION OF "MISSISSIPPI: IS THIS AMERICA? (1963-1964) FREEDOM SUMMER," Saturday, June 24, at 2:00pm at the Croton Free Library, 71 Cleveland Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY.

The Croton Free Library will host a special screening of the documentary "Mississippi: Is This America? (1963-1964) Freedom Summer," part of the award-winning television series, [Eyes on the Prize](#) that traces the history of civil rights in the United States from 1954-1980s.

The event has been organized by the Lorraine Hansberry Coalition of Croton-on-Hudson as part of the *Croton-on-Hudson Commemorates Lorraine Hansberry's 1963 Rally for Freedom* events it has

organized to commemorate the rally. The documentary covers both the events that were the impetus for Hansberry to organize, and what occurred in civil rights history in the year afterward.

After the screening, [Steven Lance](#), Policy Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), will moderate a discussion. Lance has worked to advance and defend voting rights and racial equity through legislation and policy change. He also previously worked on voting rights cases as a member of LDF's litigation team. He will help participants to see how the history covered in the documentary can inform present day activism.

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ORGANIZER/SPONSOR INFORMATION: *Croton-on Hudson Commemorates Lorraine Hansberry's 1963 Rally for Freedom*, has been organized by the Lorraine Hansberry Coalition with generous support from the [Village of Croton-on-Hudson, NY](#).

LORRAINE HANSBERRY COALITION: The Lorraine Hansberry Coalition (LHC), with generous support from the Village of Croton-on-Hudson, NY, is dedicated to celebrating the life of acclaimed playwright, author, and activist Lorraine Hansberry and her connection with Croton-on-Hudson. A volunteer-driven group, LHC creates innovative and inclusive opportunities that reflect the values and ideals by which Hansberry led her life, and welcome new members to join. This year's Co-Chairs are Signe Bergstrom and Lynda Jones. Contact: coh.di.lhc@gmail.com, visit: <https://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov/diversity-and-inclusion-committee/pages/lorraine-hansberry-coalition>.

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