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**SHARED INTEREST LAUNCHES 30TH ANNIVERSARY VOICES OF CHANGE CAMPAIGN
AT THE CARTER CENTER IN ATLANTA**

***With Special Guests H.E. Ambassador Andrew Young, Reverend Naomi Tutu,
State Senator Sonya Halpern, Global Entrepreneur Felicia Mabuza-Suttle,
Actor and Activist Louis Gossett, Jr.***

New York, NY, May 5, 2023: Shared Interest, the leading non-profit guarantee fund dedicated to providing Black women entrepreneurs and other small and medium-sized enterprises in Southern Africa with access to the financing, markets, and skills they need to build wealth, launched their 30th Anniversary Campaign, themed **VOICES OF CHANGE: Empowering the Next Generation of Black Entrepreneurs in the US & Southern Africa**, at The Carter Center in Atlanta on Monday, April 24th, 2023. The campaign was launched in conjunction with South Africa's Freedom Day that is celebrated on April 27.

The goal of Shared Interest's 30th Anniversary campaign is to raise awareness and resources for the critical role that black women entrepreneurs and other small and medium-sized enterprises play in advancing the fight for racial, gender and economic justice in the USA and in Southern Africa. **H.E Ambassador Andrew Young, Jr.**, Global Civil Rights Leader, Former Mayor of Atlanta and a powerful **global voice of change**, delivered the keynote address, sharing his commitment to inspiring the next generation of visionary leaders to advance the global fight for economic development, poverty alleviation and food insecurity. Ambassador Young shared his personal reflections on the apartheid struggle, and Atlanta's unique role in advancing the fight for racial and economic justice in Southern Africa.

"Our yearlong *Voices of Change* campaign will highlight the influential voices of financial inclusion, philanthropy, social impact and advocacy that have been critical to the economic empowerment of Black women entrepreneurs and other small and medium-sized enterprises in driving sustainable and inclusive development solutions in Southern Africa," stated **Ann McMikel, Executive Director**, Shared Interest. "Another key focus will be our work in partnering with HBCUs to empower the next generation of young black leaders to become global entrepreneurs and social impact leaders."

Additional guest speakers included **Reverend Naomi Tutu**, Episcopal Clergy and Race and Gender Activist and Daughter of the late Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who serves on Shared Interest's Board of Advisors; **Felicia Mabuza-Suttle**, a globally respected South African media expert and entrepreneur, who also serves on Shared Interest's Board of Advisors; **Georgia State Senator Sonya Halpern**, who is currently championing HBCU legislation in Georgia, and legendary Actor and Activist **Louis Gossett, Jr.**

Reverend Tutu commended the work that Shared Interest is doing among women and young people in South Africa, citing a specific example. "There is a group of young men who started a breakfast feeding program for children in their community who were going to school hungry; they saw and recognized that making an investment in those even younger themselves is what is going to build our country. These are the young people that Shared Interest is encouraging and supporting," she declared.

Senator Halpern spoke of her work chairing a study committee on HBCUs, which looked at the challenges facing the institutions themselves, and explored new ways to support the growth and sustainability of these schools. "One of the most exciting ideas that came out of the work that we did it is legislation that would create HBCU Economic Planning & Prosperity Districts, to use them as anchor institutions within their community to drive workforce development and economic development to the benefit of the schools themselves but also to the communities in which they sit."

Mrs. Mabuza-Suttle shared memories of her childhood growing up in Soweto and her determination to succeed against overwhelming odds. She introduced her good friend Lou Gossett, Jr. who had inspiring parting words for the audience. "We as a people need to be together for our mutual salvation, otherwise we are all lost" he said. "It is time to get rid of resentments and angers, even though we may feel justified in having them; we must free our minds as we are one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all".

A powerful **dance performance from Bailey Kolaras**, a Spelman College student and Founder & CEO of BAK Outreach For the Advancement of Arts, rounded out the inspiring program of events at the Brunch Reception.

The 30th Anniversary Campaign will continue rolling out over the coming months as Shared Interest will be hosting a series of events in Boston, New York, and Washington DC, introducing a strategic pillar of the campaign at each event.

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About Shared Interest

Shared Interest was established in 1994 by Founder Donna Katzin along with other U.S. anti-apartheid activists and socially responsible investors with an unwavering passion for advancing human rights and economic justice in South Africa. It was created as a catalytic vehicle for US investors to invest in the “new democracy” that was forming by helping to unlock local capital and other resources for Black women entrepreneurs and other small and medium-sized businesses to scale and grow.

Over the past 29 years the Shared Interest nonprofit guarantee fund has provided \$34 million in loan guarantees, that has unlocked more than \$131 million in local capital for Black businesses, and ultimately benefitted more than 2 million economically disenfranchised Southern Africans. Building on its strong track record of social impact and economic development in South Africa, Shared Interest recently implemented a new business model and expanded to other Southern African countries, including Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia.

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