



Contact: Sandy Bynum, Tourism Division
sbynum@mississippi.org

601.359.3297

EVERS TO BE HONORED ON THE MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRAIL

Jackson, Mississippi (September 22, 2009) – Governor Haley Barbour today announced a Mississippi Blues Trail Marker will be placed in Fayette to honor one of the state’s leading civil rights advocates, Charles Evers.

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) Tourism Division Heritage Trails Program, the Mississippi Blues Commission and the city of Fayette will celebrate the contributions of Evers at 11 a.m. Wednesday, September 23, 2009, in the Fayette City Park on Main Street.

“Marsha and I are thrilled that one of Mississippi’s historic Blues Trail Markers will commemorate the contributions of Charles Evers in helping expand the audience for the blues. His life-long interest in the blues and his life-long commitment to civil rights will never be forgotten.”

James Charles Evers born September 11, 1922 is an important civil rights advocate in the United States. The older brother of civil rights martyr Medgar Evers, Charles Evers is a leading civil rights spokesman in his native Mississippi. He was the first African American elected since the Reconstruction era as mayor in a Mississippi city, in Fayette in 1969.

In 1969, Evers was named “Man of the Year” by the NAACP. In the same year, he won election as the mayor of Fayette. He ran for governor in 1972 and the United States Senate in 1978. Evers was re-elected as mayor of Fayette in 1973 after his unsuccessful bid for the governorship. He served as mayor until 1981, and again from 1985 to 1989. Over the years Evers has been an outspoken proponent for the rights of African Americans. He has also served as an informal advisor to Presidents John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan. Charles Evers still lives in Mississippi and is currently the station manager of radio station WMPR 90.1 FM in Jackson, Mississippi. Evers has told his complex life story well in the memoir *Have No Fear*.

The Mississippi Blues Trail markers are funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by support from the Town of Fayette, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Delta State University and the Mississippi Development Authority.

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Mississippi is well known as a destination for music lovers. Governor Barbour created the Mississippi Blues Trail to recognize the talents of the state's countless musicians in the Birthplace of America's Music. When completed more than 180 sites will offer an unforgettable journey into Blues history.

While markers are scattered statewide, the Mississippi Blues Trail is concentrated in the heart of the Delta. The Mississippi River carved the flatlands of northwest Mississippi through generations of floods. That left fertile ground for farming and the Blues. The trail starts at the first official marker in Holly Ridge, the resting place of the blues guitarist Charley Patton. The trail then winds its way to sites honoring B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Son House and more.

For more information on the musicians and promoters honored by the Mississippi Blues Trail, or to submit information on blues artists, contact: Jim O'Neal, Mississippi Blues Trail Research Director 816-931-0383, bluesoterica@aol.com.

For more information, visit the Mississippi Blues Trail on the web at www.msbluestrail.com or click on the official MDA Tourism site www.visitmississippi.org. To contact the MDA Tourism Blues Trail call Alex Thomas (601-359-3297, athomas@mississippi.org) or Leigh Portwood (601-359-3061, lportwood@mississippi.org).

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