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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 1, 2019

**Greater Indianapolis NAACP announces South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg as keynote speaker for 50th Freedom Fund Banquet**

*Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett to serve as honorary chairman for Oct. 4 event*

**INDIANAPOLIS** – The Greater Indianapolis branch of the NAACP today announced South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg will be keynote speaker for its 50th Freedom Fund Banquet Oct. 4. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available at [indynaacp.org](http://www.indynaacp.org).

The Freedom Fund Banquet is Greater Indianapolis NAACP’s largest annual fundraiser and networking event, with proceeds supporting the branch’s civil rights mission and ongoing operating expenses. Hundreds of civic and business leaders, elected officials and guests from the Indianapolis community are expected to attend.

“The Greater Indianapolis NAACP empowers citizens to become active voices in their community and enact change,” said Chrystal Ratcliffe, branch president. “We look forward to welcoming Mayor Buttigieg as we celebrate this significant milestone in our organization’s history.”

“More than 100 years after the race riots that led to the founding of the NAACP, our progress as a nation continues to take place under the shadow of systemic racism and inequality,” said Buttigieg. “I’m honored to address the Greater Indianapolis NAACP’s 50th Freedom Fund Banquet and to join all those working to make the dream of a more just and equal society a reality for every American.”

The 50th Freedom Fund Banquet will begin at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 4, at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown. In the past year, the Indianapolis branch has focused its advocacy on access to early voting, ethnic studies standards for Indiana schools, the passage of a hate crimes law and police reform.

“This year’s banquet will celebrate not only the progress we’ve made this past year but throughout our more than 100-year history,” said Cordelia Lewis-Burks, longtime community leader, union activist and chair of the 50th Freedom Fund Banquet. “We welcome anyone who feels strongly about activism and civil rights to join us as we look toward the future and continue to fight for change.”

Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, who will serve as honorary chairman for the event, commended the Greater Indianapolis NAACP and its ongoing impact on the city.

“For more than a century, the NAACP has helped to move communities forward, ensuring greater political, educational, social and economic equality for our neighbors,” said Hogsett. “The Greater Indianapolis branch has fought tirelessly for legislative and policy reforms here in Central Indiana, and it’s an honor to be a part of this year’s celebration as they mark the 50th year of the Freedom Fund Banquet.”

Individual tickets are available for $75 and can be purchased online through the Greater Indianapolis branch’s webpage at [indynaacp.org](http://www.indynaacp.org) or by calling Branch Secretary Phyllis Carr at 317.925.5127. Both sources can also provide information on a variety of sponsorship options, including premium, table and host sponsorships.

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**About Greater Indianapolis NAACP**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is the nation’s oldest, largest and most widely recognized civil rights organization. Its mission is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights for all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. The Greater Indianapolis branch of the NAACP was founded in 1912. Throughout our 107-year history, we have continued to fight for civil rights, particularly in the areas of job and housing discrimination. We have long sought to empower people through the ballot box and continue to vigorously defend voting rights and help register voters.

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