



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ATLANTA, GA... Congressman William H. Gray, III from the second district of Pennsylvania, will be the keynote speaker at the Voter Education Project's Twenty-First Anniversary Banquet at the Atlanta Omni International Hotel, October 27, 7:30 P.M.

The Voter Education Project will also highlight its twenty-one years of providing financial and technical aid to registration and education efforts in 11 southern states by giving the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award to City Councilman John Lewis. Formerly Executive Director of VEP from 1970 until 1977, Mr. Lewis will be honored for his contributions to the struggle for voting rights, and increasing black voter registration. During the civil rights marches of the early sixties, Mr. Lewis was almost fatally beaten outside of Selma, Alabama.

Other former Executive Directors - Wiley Branton, Vernon Jordan, Vivian Malone Jones and Sherrill Marcus - will receive special recognition.

Congressman Gray is now serving his third term in the House of Representatives, and currently serves on the Appropriations and House Budget Committees. Previously a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. Gray is known for his extensive expertise in international affairs, with particular interest in African affairs.

The Mexican Tourist Industry and American Airlines will sponsor a door prize at the VEP dinner; the winner will receive a free trip to Mexico.

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Amidst a flurry of national publicity concerning the black vote this year and in 1984, the Voter Education Project has quietly continued its concrete efforts towards black voter registration. Executive Director Geraldine Thompson reported that over 100 local registration and education projects throughout the South have been funded thus far. "It is anticipated," she said, "our projects will register roughly 350,000 blacks in the South by the end of this year." Thompson stated that following a review of statistical reports at the end of 1983, VEP will target a goal of registering 500,000 southern blacks by the end of 1984.

"The time has come," she stated, "for blacks to become more than symbolic ornaments in the electoral process. For that to happen, there must be aggressive, organized, and widespread voter registration and education in the black community."

Individual VEP dinner tickets are selling for \$50.00; tables are \$500.00.

A non-partisan, tax exempt organization since 1965 and operative since 1962, VEP is supported by private foundations, corporations, and individuals.

For more information please call, 522-7495.

These activities are being coordinated by Eventious, Inc.