

Statement in Support of Posthumous Presidential Pardon of Marcus Mosiah Garvey

In recognition of his lifelong and substantial contributions to society, his efforts to uplift peoples of African descent the world over, and his work to promote economic independence as a Presidential Pardon means of social progress, Dr. Waldaba Stewart and Esmeralda Brown Stewart (Representatives of the Central American Black Organization (CABO), a Network of People of African Descent in each country of Central America, stand in support of the descendants of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, who now seek a posthumous presidential pardon on Garvey's behalf.

Marcus Garvey lives in history as one of the first leaders of the American civil rights movement. In the early twentieth century, he was an advocate for the social, political, and economic independence of those of African descent across the world, and Garvey staked his name and his movement on the development of economic opportunity as a source of black empowerment. To unite his followers toward a common goal of social progress, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), which at its height boasted nearly 6 million members in 40 countries. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "He was the first man on a mass scale and level to give millions of Negroes a sense of dignity and destiny. And make the Negro feel that he was Somebody."

Garvey, as he traveled throughout the countries of the Atlantic Coast of Central America, of the Caribbean Sea a/k/a the Caribbean Basin, taught us to love and unite with all peoples of good will, including African Americans, Indigenous Peoples and other Americans as we involve ourselves in Fair Two Way Trade for the benefit of all the peoples in our region and in the U.S. In my former life as a New York State Representative of people in the Caribbean Diaspora, I relied on my understanding of the teachings of Marcus Garvey as we also strove to succeed in Brooklyn, New York.

I am also an Adjunct Professor of Medgar Evers College and the Program Coordinator of the Caribbean research Center at Medgar Evers College where I spend a considerable amount of time motivating students to assume leadership in their respective communities using the example of Marcus Garvey.

In my capacity as a former State Senator and as a present Community leader and organizer in Brooklyn New York, I share with you the feelings of more than 150 organizations in the Brooklyn New York Caribbean community of a population of 1 million residents in 8 Planning Board Districts.

Esmeralda Brown Stewart, my wife, represented for many years the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church office at the United Nations, providing capacity building to Indigenous Peoples and Peoples of African Descent and the Central American black Organization as they sought to represent their communities at the United Nations. Now retired, she continues her work representing an organization in consultative status at the United Nations. In all of her work she has constantly emphasized the teachings of Marcos Garvey.

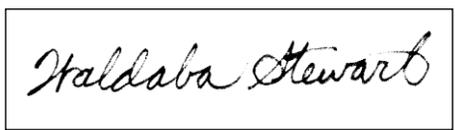
In the world of more than a million persons we both represent, this posthumous pardon will be greatly appreciated and will help us in our work especially by the young men and women

with whom we share the history and the details of the work of Marcus Garvey as part of the heritage.

Because of these achievements, Garvey was viewed as a threat to the established order by the U.S. government. Decades before Dr. King would become targeted for his activism, J. Edgar Hoover led the Bureau of Investigation in its surveillance of Garvey and actively sought methods to disrupt and destroy Garvey's civil rights movement. In 1923, based on intelligence gathered from undercover agents posing as Garvey supporters and aided by judicial proceedings that have largely been condemned as factually unsound and politically and racially motivated, Garvey was convicted of mail fraud and sentenced to five years in federal prison. In partial recognition of the unsettling facts underlying the prosecution of the case, President Calvin Coolidge commuted the sentence in November 1927, but deported Garvey from the country.

The posthumous pardon petition now filed on Garvey's behalf seeks to exonerate him from the stigma of this conviction. Following the commutation of his sentence, efforts to fully clear Garvey's name have been ongoing and concerted on the part of the U.S. Congress, civil society organizations, cities, states, and international groups. More than 90 years after the imposition of this injustice, it is time to exonerate Marcus Mosiah Garvey and let history reflect the true nature of his legacy.

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Haldaba Stewart". A horizontal line extends from the right side of the box.A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Esmeralda Brown Stewart". A horizontal line extends from the right side of the box.

Esmeralda Brown Stewart