



For Immediate Release

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## Rosa & Raymond Parks Institute (RRPI) and O Museum Announces “Hold My Hand Challenge” to Commemorate Mrs. Rosa Parks

### **People Asked to Hold Hands; Hootie & the Blowfish Donate “Hold My Hand” as Challenge Theme Song**

Washington, D.C.— February 3, 2020 — To celebrate the life of Mrs. Rosa Parks — RRPI and O Museum in The Mansion are asking people to come together and hold hands with their friends, family, neighbors, school and office mates starting February 4th, the birthday of Mrs. Parks.

Hootie & the Blowfish have given the rights to use their iconic debut hit “Hold My Hand” for the theme music of the nation-wide event. **VIEW: [“Hold My Hand Campaign” video](#)**

“The Hootie & the Blowfish song is a perfect way to introduce and to sustain an annual Mrs. Parks’ national hand holding campaign -- making it the anthem for the movement.” Says Ms. Elaine Steele, co-founder of RRPI. “We are so grateful to them for their generosity and love.”

Help spread Mrs. Parks’ messages of hope, unity, and love when you participate — document and share your hand holding experience on your favorite social channels and challenge your friends/followers to post their own video or image/photograph. Post your videos and images using the hashtag **#HoldMyHandChallenge**

On December 1, 1955, Mrs. Parks ignited the civil rights movement when she refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a municipal bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She was a life-long advocate for human rights and dignity for all.

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“The Hold My Hand Challenge” is the creation of RRPI and H.H. Leonards, Founder of O Museum, who opened The Mansion February 14, 1980 and who provided a home-away-from-home for Mrs. Parks. Mrs. Parks moved there for a period of time after she was brutally assaulted in her home in Detroit.

Holding hands is something Mrs. Parks did to inspire those she met. She said, “It’s a simple, non-threatening gesture that holds immense opportunity to ignite change and to demonstrate how we should all focus on what we have in common with each other. When you hold hands, there is no fear.”

“What better way to highlight unity in our Nation, than to have people hold hands in Mrs. Parks’ honor throughout the world” said Ms. Leonards.

“Mrs. Parks believed in the power of touch — she gently touched the hands of nearly everyone she met, from the Pope, to President’s, Secretary of State, to people who served our government with generosity and love, to people that she met at church to people in her neighborhood, but especially to the children of the world, who she loved, with all her heart. She knew that holding hands unites us, boosts love, creates bonds and provides a sense of security -- and most important community.” said Ms. Leonards

“Now more than ever the world needs to be reminded of Mrs. Parks’ gentle strength, her peaceful activism, and her capacity for compassion and forgiveness,” says Darius Rucker, of Hootie & the Blowfish. “We hope our song will provide a way to change hearts and minds. Laws may have changed, but we still need to change some people’s hearts.”

Everyone is encouraged to visit The Library of Congress’ Exhibition “Mrs. Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words” to learn more about Mrs. Rosa Parks’ life and work.

**Additional information about the activities may be obtained by visiting [holdmyhandchallenge.org](http://holdmyhandchallenge.org)**

About [The Rosa and Raymond Institute for Self-Development](#)

About the [Library of Congress Exhibit: Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words](#)

About The [O Museum in the Mansion](#)

About [Hootie & the Blowfish](#)

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