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For more information, contact:

Andria Lisle
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Obsidian Public Relations
901-544-6208
andria.lisle@brooksmuseum.org

Lauren Hannaford

901-262-8651
lauren@obsidianpr.com

***This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement*
to Open at the Brooks Museum During Black History Month**

Memphis, Tennessee, Nov. 25, 2014 - For its third exhibition of the 2014 - 2015 season, the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art will document the efforts of mid-20 century community activists through *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement*. The exhibition features a collection of 157 black-and-white photographs taken primarily in the South between 1963 and 1968. *This Light of Ours* opens Feb. 14 and ends May 10, 2015.

Exploring the Civil Rights Movement through the work and voices of nine activist photographers representing two generations and an array of ethnic identities, the exhibition dynamically documents the national struggle against segregation and other forms of race-based disenfranchisement. The images by Bob Adelman, George Ballis, Bob Fitch, Bob Fletcher, Matt Herron, David Prince, Herbert Randall, Maria Varela and Tamio Wakayama offer a remarkable, moving view of this crucial period in American history. Unlike photojournalists, who covered breaking news events, these photographers lived within the Civil Rights Movement—working primarily with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—to document the efforts of both activists and local citizens.

Organized by the Center for Documentary Expression and Art in Salt Lake City, Utah, and curated by Matt Herron, one of the contributing photographers, the exhibition's name was inspired by "This Little Light of Mine," a children's gospel song written by composer and teacher Harry Dixon Loes around 1920, which became a civil rights anthem during the 1950s and '60s. The exhibition highlights the efforts of unsung heroes within the movement, capturing the day-to-day struggles of everyday citizens working to register voters, hold workshops, and march for civil rights. Through programming, the Brooks

Museum will make connections between the efforts of citizen activists in the mid-20th century and those working today.

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"*This Light of Ours* is one in a long line of exhibitions at the Brooks relating to photography, and more specifically to works by and about African Americans," said Marina Pacini, chief curator and curator of American, Modern and Contemporary art at the Brooks Museum.

"We are so excited because it offers a unique insider perspective that captures the deeply moving relationships between the photographers and their subjects. It's an extremely timely exhibition. We are proud to announce a collaboration with the National Civil Rights Museum in early 2015."

During the exhibition, the Brooks Museum will host several events that afford unique opportunities to experience the photographs, including a free community day, film screenings, guided tours, talks and panel discussions, and an interactive space within the exhibition.

A partnership with the National Civil Rights Museum, located in Downtown Memphis only four-and-a-half miles from the Brooks, will include a loan exhibition of photographs from the Brooks Museum's permanent collection. Set to run concurrently with *This Light of Ours*, this exhibition will include works by famed Memphis photographer Ernest Withers.

Major support for *This Light of Ours* has been provided by the Bruce W. Bastian Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Local support has been provided by **the Hohenberg Foundation**. General admission tickets can be purchased in person at the museum, online at www.brooksmuseum.org or by calling 901-544-6200.

About the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, located at 1934 Poplar Ave. in historic Overton Park, is one of the leading art museums in the American South. More than 9,000 works make up the Brooks Museum's permanent collection, including ancient works from Greece, Rome and the ancient Americas; Renaissance masterpieces from Italy; English portraiture; American painting and decorative arts; contemporary art; and a survey of African art. For more information about the

Brooks and all other exhibitions and programs, call 901-544-6200 or visit www.brooksmuseum.org.

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