

# JET

A JOHNSON PUBLICATION

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JULY 18, 2005 • VOL. 108, NO. 3

## REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM of Maryland African American History & Culture



Family members of the late business giant **REGINALD F. LEWIS** (l-r), daughter Leslie Lewis Sword, mother Carolyn E. Fugett, widow Loida Lewis, and daughter Christina Lewis, attend the opening of the Black history and culture museum named in his honor in Baltimore **ON PAGE 20**.

Cover photo by Valerie Goodloe

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JET (ISSN 0021-5996) is published weekly except combined issue in December. U.S.A. one year \$38.00; Canada, Pan America \$44.00; foreign \$48.00 by Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., 820 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605. Payable in U.S. currency only. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, Illinois and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to JET, P.O. Box 56212 Boulder, CO. 80321-6212

Offices at Rockefeller Center, 1270 Avenue of The Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020, 1750 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, 6500 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048.

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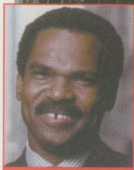
Canadian GST No. R 124 411380

Return Undeliverable Canadian Address To P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill ON L4B 4R6  
Publications Mail Agreement No. 40048950

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## Baltimore Celebrates Opening Of Maryland Black History Museum Named For Late Business Tycoon Reginald F. Lewis

Strikingly clad in black, red, gold and white, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in downtown Baltimore proudly sports the Maryland state colors. Below, Lewis' widow, Loida Lewis, speaks at the opening ceremonies.



*Reginald F. Lewis*

**A**fter nearly 12 years of planning, the \$34 million Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland

African American History and Culture celebrated its grand opening in an elaborate program that marked the past and looked to the future.

The five-story, 82,000-square-foot facility, designed by Black architects of the Freelon Group/RTKL, is located in Baltimore's Inner Harbor and is named after the





▲ Enjoying the festivities surrounding the museum's opening are family members of the late business tycoon and Maryland native son Reginald F. Lewis (l-r) his brother, Jean S. Fugett; daughter, Leslie Lewis Sword; mother, Carolyn E. Fugett; widow, Loida Lewis; and daughter Christina Lewis.

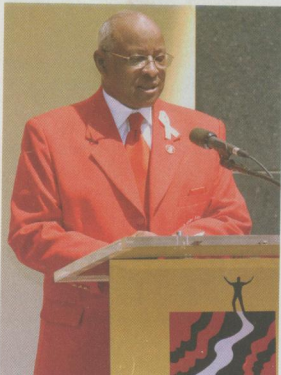
Baltimore native who was the first Black man to own his own Fortune 500 corporation.

The largest African-American history museum on the East Coast, the museum includes a café, 200-seat theater, a state-of-the-art resource center, an oral history recording/listening studio and a gift shop. It contains exhibits that trace the Black experience in America, as well as the histories and legacies of famous Black Marylanders like Harriet Tubman, Billie Holiday, Thurgood Marshall, Matthew Henson and Frederick Douglass.

A major exhibit is wreckage from the earliest identified slave ship that sank off

► Noted jurist George L. Russell, Jr addresses guests; he serves as board chairman of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture. It is now the East Coast's largest museum dedicated to Black history and culture.

the Florida coast titled "A Slave Ship Speaks: The Wreck of the *Henrietta*"





▲ Among the dignitaries speaking at the opening of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture in Baltimore are (l-r) Maryland Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele, U.S. Senate Candidate and former NAACP President Kweisi Mfume and Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley.

*Marie.*” It contains artifacts, documents and historical records about the slave ship that played a large role in the TransAtlantic slave trade.

Galleries of ancient cultural traditions in art, sculpture, music, storytelling, and literature outline Maryland Blacks’ contributions to art.

During the grand opening, Lewis’ mother, Carolyn E. Fugett, and widow, Loida N. Lewis, looked on as dignitaries, including Lt. Gov. Michael Steele, Mayor Martin O’Malley and former NAACP president Kweisi Mfume spoke.

Museum founder, George L. Russell Jr., a Baltimore native who was the first Black appointed to a Maryland Appellate Court, told the audience that the museum served an important purpose.

“Every child, Black or White, should

come to this museum,” he said. “Every police officer should be asked to come to this museum. Every newspaper reporter should come to this museum, so they can understand the trials and tribulations of 60% of the people in Baltimore city.”

Russell accepted the challenge of building the museum, amid skepticism from the community and government, who agreed to appropriate \$31 million for the museum only after the first \$1.5 million was raised from outside sources.

Baltimore Orioles’ owner Peter G. Angelos donated the entire \$1.5 million. After that, additional funding came from large companies, including Comcast, Verizon, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Reginald F. Lewis Foundation, which donated \$5 million, the largest gift.

In appreciation, Russell and the board



## BLACK HISTORY

of directors decided to name the museum after Lewis, a Harvard Law graduate who became known as "the wealthiest Black man in history" after he purchased TLC Beatrice International Foods—a global giant with 64 companies in 31 countries—for just under \$1 billion.

"This museum will allow children to dream," said Russell. "I mean, we're in pursuit of excellence, and it's that pursuit that has driven me."

The museum is a gift to the community. Although it's expected to generate \$9.5 million annually in tourism, its biggest impact will be on Maryland schools. A partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education has been formed to develop a curriculum titled "An African American Journey." This has been piloted in elementary and middle schools, and is scheduled to be implemented statewide for grades K-12.

This was Russell's whole purpose for building the museum—to provide hope for younger generations.

"Like no other museum in the nation, the Reginald F. Museum is an institution demonstrating the diversity of the African-American experience through stories, oral histories, exhibits and public programming. It will also celebrate those African-American Marylanders who through their legacies encourage future generations to keep reaching for their dreams, no matter what." □

—Asha Taylor

—Photos by Fred Watkins



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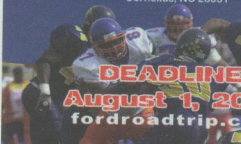
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