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## **For Immediate Release**

### **Haitian Community Commemorates Toussaint L'Ouverture**

(MIAMI, April 6, 2006) A memorial observance to mark the 203<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the death of Haitian patriot and martyr Toussaint L'Ouverture will take place in Miami's Little Haiti at 6 PM on Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, at Place Toussaint L'Ouverture (corner of North Miami Avenue and Northwest 62<sup>nd</sup> Street). The ceremony will include the laying of a wreath at the feet of the statue of the great general and emancipator, and brief speeches by members of the Haitian community.

"Though reportedly small in stature, this great statesman occupies a place of major significance in Haitian history," states Father Fritz Bazin, pastor of St. Paul et Les Martyrs Church in Little Haiti. "He envisioned a world where justice and the rights of all men were safeguarded, regardless of racial and religious differences. He set an example of community building that holds lessons for us here, today."

A former slave who became a self-taught superb military strategist and visionary leader, Toussaint was captured through trickery and died in a French prison in April 1803, but as, William Wordsworth wrote in his poem, *To Toussaint L'Ouverture*, "Though fallen thyself, never to ride again, Live and take comfort. Thou has left behind Powers that will work for thee." Under the command of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the united black and mulatto forces defeated the troops sent by Napoleon Bonaparte to reimpose slavery, and the revolution was completed when Haiti declared independence on January 1st 1804.

This event is being organized by both Haitian and non-Haitian residents of Miami-Dade County, who invite the general public to join them in remembering this great man.