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***Albany Black Chamber of Commerce & Social Club Holds
Open House & Ribbon Cutting After Successful Grand Opening***

The Albany Black Chamber of Commerce's doors opened for the public immediately following a press conference and ribbon cutting, held at the start of Black History Month

February 1, 2023 – (Albany, N.Y.) – Marking the beginning of Black History Month, the Albany Black Chamber of Commerce & Social Club (ABCC) made history as it opened its doors to the public for the first time in a series of upcoming open houses designed to welcome Albany's Black and minority business community to "their" new home. The open house was held immediately following a press event in front of ABCC's new building located at 141 Washington Ave. (formerly the historic University Club), a venture made possible by the generous support of Business for Good. The new building offers greater office space, common spaces to gather and host events, and a bowling alley in the basement for recreational use. A perfect balance between work and play, the ABCC will serve as a blueprint for community building and advocacy.

Prior to today's event, ABCC held a highly successful Grand Opening Black Tie event on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, welcoming 150 distinguished guests for what will become an annual event. Guests mingled throughout all three levels of the building and stood in awe of its extraordinary transformation. In her address to guests, CEO of the Albany Black Chamber & Social Club, Deshanna Wiggins, acknowledged the standard of excellence that will be birthed within and through the one-of-a-kind Chamber.

"Here we are, so many years later, on MLK Day, in a room that was historically for White males only, setting a monumental precedence of what a Black Chamber of Commerce has to offer," said Wiggins during the January 16 event. "Many of our vendors tonight, at least 80 percent of them, are Black owned, and this is just the tip of the iceberg of what's coming from Albany Black Chamber of Commerce & Social Club."

Both the Grand Opening and Open House events are sponsored by numerous community entities who all share their excitement in supporting the Chamber and its leader.

"Deshanna Wiggins is truly a force to be reckoned with," said Tamika Otis, Corporate Responsibility & Community Relations Officer for KeyBank, a Premier Sponsor of both the Grand Opening and Open House. "We at KeyBank are grateful for the opportunity to support the Albany Black Chamber and look forward to together advancing this movement Deshanna has been entrusted to lead. Her vision will set the standard for what a Black Chamber should look and feel like."

"We purchased the University Club to help elevate Black and Minority-Owned businesses in Downtown Albany," said Ed Mitzen, co-Founder of Business for Good. "A chamber of commerce is an integral part of

the economic development of a community, and we are so proud that The Albany Black Chamber will have a permanent home here.”

“Ed and I talked about building an eco-system, because that’s what I saw when I was in Atlanta,” added Jahkeen Hoke, CEO of Business for Good. “An eco-system that is a pipeline from school to college to career to success to wealth creation to building generational businesses and generational wealth. Thinking back to my time growing up in Albany, when kids saw a person of color wearing a suit, they assumed they were going to court or to a funeral. The ABCC will aim to change that. Because of this investment and other investments made by Business for Good, we will see a change in trajectory not just for this city, but also for kids.”

The Albany Black Chamber of Commerce & Social Club (ABCC), established in 2022, provides a hyper focus on the development, promotion, and growth of the Capital Region’s Black and minority owned businesses by creating and cultivating equitable business support, advocacy, and advisory services. In partnership with Business for Good, ABCC will provide innovative programming and will dedicate support and resources to underserved entrepreneurs within the community.

“The opening of the Albany Black Chamber is a momentous occasion for our Black and minority business community and the entire City of Albany,” said Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan. “This new space in the former University Club will be utilized for business engagement, mentorship, and leadership development in an effort to enhance the vibrancy of our neighborhoods and expand business opportunities for our residents and prospective residents.”

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About the Albany Black Chamber of Commerce:

The newly formed Albany Black Chamber of Commerce will play a vital role in establishing equitable business opportunities for the BIPOC communities of Albany and the surrounding areas. In partnership with Business for Good, ABCC will provide innovative programs and opportunities in their new home, the historic University Club. To learn more visit: www.albanyblackchamber.org

About the University Club:

Founded in 1901 to promote social intercourse among its members by providing reading and assembly rooms, the purpose of the club was to cultivate and maintain university spirit in the city of Albany. Club leadership commissioned the construction of the building at 141 Washington Ave. in 1924 following a fire at the club’s previous location. It opened in May 1925.

About Business for Good:

With values rooted in equity, access, opportunity, and prosperity, Business for Good has advanced the model of traditional venture philanthropy to Do Good and Give Back to communities in the Greater Capital Region of Albany. Formed in 2020, BFG seeks to give back to move forward and is rooted in the core principle of “for good, not gain.” Its efforts were recognized on a national level with a 2022 Fast Company’s World Changing Ideas Honorable Mention, which recognizes pioneering teams that are playing an important role in the betterment of the world through intentional philanthropy. Comprised of a mission-focused team, Business for Good believes no challenge is insurmountable through hard and thoughtful work. With a goal to provide businesses and organizations with sustained support, BFG invests in people for the long term and in every way. Business for Good: building better businesses, stronger communities, and a more equitable world. To learn more, visit www.bfg.org