

## **Civil Rights Icon, Diane Nash, Sues Estranged Daughter For Improperly Using Her Persona To Bolster Finances of Fledgling Organization**

CHICAGO, IL – March 18, 2018 -- Civil Rights leader Diane Nash filed a lawsuit against her decades-long estranged daughter, Sherrilynn Bevel, for violating the Illinois Right of Publicity Act and the Deceptive Trade Practices Act stemming from Bevel's unauthorized and unlawful use of Nash's name, identity, and international reputation as a civil rights icon and nonviolence activist, to improperly bolster Bevel's reputation and to raise funds for the Addie Wyatt Center for Nonviolence Training, an entity for which Bevel has an ownership stake.

The lawsuit, filed in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, alleges that Bevel and the Wyatt Center are improperly trading on Nash's name for financial gain to profit from her reputation and to promote the Wyatt Center's so-called "Kingian Nonviolence" training workshops and seminars. The Wyatt Center claims to offer Chicago-area schools and community organizations workshops to teach "Kingian Nonviolence theory and practice" – an invented term of art. The Wyatt Center's business model appears to focus on selling conflict reconciliation training seminars and profiting from people in neighborhoods rife with violence, while obtaining fundraising dollars from foundations and organizations to support that work.

Diane Nash, a Chicago native was one of the principal architects and pioneers of the nonviolent 1960s Civil Rights Movement, having participated and held leadership, strategic, and transformative roles in most major civil rights actions that occurred during that time.

Nash was a leader in the burgeoning Nashville Movement where she was noted for her calm courage as the chairperson of the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins in 1960. In April 1960, after months of continual protests, Nash helped lead nearly 4,000 people on a march to Nashville's City Hall to confront the mayor about the escalating violence against protestors. During that confrontation, Nash provocatively asked the mayor on the steps of City Hall, "Do you feel it is wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of their race or color?" The mayor admitted that he did. This confrontation motivated action and only three weeks later Nashville became the first southern city to desegregate its lunch counters.

Nash emphasizes that thousands of people who participated in the Civil Rights Movement were essential for the movement to be successful.

In May 1961, Nash coordinated the historic Freedom Rides from Birmingham to Montgomery, Alabama to Jackson, Mississippi. She was arrested and jailed many times, and continued to fight for justice as director of the direct action arm of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1961 and as a member, appointed by President John F. Kennedy, of a national committee promoting passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1963; Nash was an architect of the Selma Right-To-Vote

Movement. She was an instructor in the philosophy and strategy of Nonviolence for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Nash has received numerous awards for her accomplishments including one of six awards at the March on Washington in 1963 presented to Negro Women Freedom Fighters, the "Distinguished American Award" in March 2003 from the John F. Kennedy Library; the 2008 National Freedom Award from the National Civil Rights Museum and the Living Legend Award from the National Voting Rights museum in Selma, Alabama in 2009.

Bevel's and the Wyatt Center's attempt to financially benefit on Nash's status as a Civil Rights leader violates Illinois law.

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*With remarks on nonviolence by Sherri Bevel,  
daughter of Chicago civil rights activists James Bevel and Diane Nash*



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