

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT INFO:

Mark Meeks (770) 355-2418

Ryan Deal (404) 910-3942

Land Battle Watched by the World Gains New Weapon

**ATLANTA-AREA FLORIST RATCHETS UP BATTLE OVER EMINENT DOMAIN –
ANNOUNCES NEVER-BEFORE SALE OF LAND TO STAVE OFF GOVERNMENT LAND SEIZURE**

STOCKBRIDGE, Ga., December 16, 2009 – At a news conference and flanked by anti- eminent domain abuse demonstrators, owners of **Stockbridge Florist & Gifts** unveiled their newest weapon in their high-stakes battle over control and ownership of their property – *the public*. In a first-ever, history-making land offering, Mark and Regina Meeks are selling land at the site of their flower shop to *ANYONE* and *EVERYONE*. In a never attempted land deed modification, the Meeks will seek to add thousands of new owners to their land deed, thus making it forever impossible for the land to be taken through the controversial process of eminent domain. “While a last resort, we believe selling our land to the public is our only way of keeping what’s ours, preserving our livelihood, and recouping at least a fraction of our losses,” flower shop owner Mark Meeks said. Details can be found at www.stockbridgefloristfund.com.

Mark and Regina Meeks have lived under constant and imminent threat of eminent domain since 2005 when elected officials in Stockbridge, Ga. began condemning the Meeks’ land through eminent domain. Despite winning an appeal in April of 2006, the Meeks fear the City of Stockbridge will make another attempt at condemnation due to conclusions in the Court’s order which “do not prevent the Condemnor from filing another petition.” Supporters of Stockbridge Florist & Gifts include numerous national organizations, activists and both state and local chapters of the NAACP.

“I stand with them,” said **Edward Dubose, the President of Georgia’s NAACP** from his south Ga. home. “This is also happening in our community. When the government has unchecked, unlimited reach to take property, entire communities of ours could be devastated. We’ve seen it happen.”

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“We have been working on this idea for over a year and feel that we have no other alternative,” Meeks said. The land offering should attract landowner-partners who, for as little as \$25.00, will purchase a piece of history, stave off eminent domain condemnation, and help the Meeks recover some of more than \$300,000 in legal expenses. “The burden of five court cases and associated legal fees has us on the brink of financial disaster. And we’ve endured the emotional suffering that comes with uncertainty and injustice.”

Monies generated will also help to fund the Private Property Project, a non-profit organization aimed at preserving property rights and serving as a future resource center for property owners in the U.S.

Georgia State Rep. Steve Davis, R-Henry Co., also speaking at the news conference, explained why legislation to reform eminent domain standards and procedures throughout Georgia is paramount on his agenda during the 2010 legislative session which begins in early January. “I don’t believe government should be in the business of land development or sales. However, when there is a need for the use of an individual’s or company’s property for a legitimate public purpose, then we must ensure that all other options have been attempted and that property owners are justly compensated without the need to defend themselves from their government,” Davis said.

Stockbridge Florist & Gifts has been owned and operated by Mark and Regina Meeks for 26 years. Their story has, in the past, been featured on CNN, FOX News, MSNBC, WSB-TV, WGCL-TV, WXIA-TV, WAGA-TV and has appeared in major U.S. newspapers.

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