Statement from the Ronald W. Walters Leadership and Public Policy Center

The world lost the greatest leader of our generation when former South African President, Nelson Mandela transitioned on December 5, 2013. He taught us patience, perseverance, fight, forgiveness and commitment. We followed his struggle for freedom in South Africa from the Free Nelson Mandela posters we hung on the wall of our college dormitory rooms to our participation in the demonstrations at the South African Embassy and throughout the United States. We watched with pride when he stepped out to freedom after 27 years of captivity looking regal and not expressing bitterness. We took notes from the lessons he taught us about reconciliation and nation building.

The Walters Center stands on the foundation set by Mr. Mandela. We are pleased that Dr. Ronald Walters had a long engagement in the U.S. African liberation movement and the Free South African Movement and that he served as an official observer for the first free South African election in which Mr. Mandela was elected President. We are also proud of the role of our visiting fellow, former Congressman Ronald Dellums, in sponsoring legislation that helped lead to the release of Mr. Mandela from prison and to the dismantling of apartheid.

We join people around the world in recognizing the contributions of Nelson Mandela (Madiba) to the world and in finding ways to preserve his legacy. Our sympathy goes out to his wife, Graça Machel, his children and the rest of his family as they deal with the grief of losing a family member.

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