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***THIS BRIGHT LIGHT OF OURS: STORIES FROM THE VOTING RIGHTS FIGHT
IN WILCOX COUNTY, ALABAMA***
BOOK TALK PRESENTED BY MARIA GITIN ON JUNE 7, 2016

Montgomery, AL (5/10/16) – On **Tuesday, June 7 at 12:00 pm**, author Maria Gitin will present ***This Bright Light of Ours: Stories from the Voting Rights Fight in Wilcox County, Alabama***, at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery.

After watching the events of “Bloody Sunday” in Selma, Alabama, on March 7, 1965, unfold on her television in California, 19-year-old Maria Gitin was one of hundreds of college students who answered Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s call to action. During the summer of 1965, Gitin worked alongside local black leaders in rural Wilcox County, Alabama, registering new black voters. Her life-changing experiences that summer included speaking at mass meetings, being arrested, and learning the role of whites in the fight for civil rights. After returning home, Gitin never forgot the courageous local residents who risked their lives working by her side.

More than four decades later, Gitin returned to Wilcox County determined to give a voice to the grassroots freedom fighters who formed the backbone of the civil rights movement. In 2014, the University of Alabama Press published her book, *This Bright Light of Ours: Stories from the Voting Rights Fight*, based on Gitin’s personal letters and interviews with more than 30 Wilcox County activists and their families. In this presentation, Gitin will share stories of her experiences as a teenage civil rights worker and those of her African American co-workers and their families.

Gitin is a native of Penngrove, CA and holds a B.A. from Antioch University. She is a frequent presenter on civil rights and social justice. For twenty-eight years Gitin was principal of Maria Gitin & Associates, a national organizational development and diversity consulting group. She is author of two books of poetry, *Little Movies* (Ithaca House, 1975), and *Night Shift*, (Blue Wind Press, 1979), and a cookbook, *The Melting Pot: The Variety of American Ethnic Cooking* (The Crossing Press, 1977). Gitin has received numerous honors for her writing and social justice work. She currently lives in Santa Cruz County, CA.

Admission to this book talk is free. The public is invited to bring a brown bag lunch. Complimentary beverages will be provided. Copies of Gitin’s book will be available for purchase.

The Alabama Department of Archives and History is located in downtown Montgomery, directly across the street from the State Capitol. It is the state’s government records repository, special collections library and research facility, and is home to the Museum of Alabama, the state history museum. The Archives and Museum of Alabama are open Monday through Saturday, 8:30 to 4:30. To learn more, visit www.archives.alabama.gov or call (334) 242-4364.

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