

# News Release

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**The Foundation for the National Archives Presents its 2010 Records of Achievement Award to Documentary Filmmaker Ken Burns**

***Award presented at annual gala chaired by Morgan Freeman and sponsored by Bank of America***

**Washington, DC** – November 11, 2010 – The Foundation for the National Archives presented its seventh annual Records of Achievement Award to documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. The tribute was presented Tuesday night at the Foundation’s annual Gala, which was chaired by actor Morgan Freeman. The lead sponsor of the event was Bank of America.

The Records of Achievement Award, the Foundation’s highest honor, is the annual tribute to an individual whose work has cultivated a broader national awareness of the history and identity of the United States through the use of primary sources. The honoree’s accomplishments reflect the Foundation’s mission: To elevate the stories found in the billions of documents, photographs, maps, films, and recordings in the Archives’ holdings in a manner that fosters a fuller understanding of the American experience. The recipients of the Records of Achievement Award help inspire a deeper appreciation of the country, its democratic ideals, and the rich heritage of its people.

Previous recipients include: Tom Brokaw, Brian Lamb and C-SPAN, the late John Hope Franklin, Annette Gordon-Reed, David McCullough, and James McPherson.

“Ken Burns made his mark on America twenty years ago, through his landmark PBS series *The Civil War*, and is recognized as one of the greatest documentarians of all time,” said Foundation for the National Archives Chairman and President Ken Lore. “Whether he is teaching us about war, baseball, jazz, or the wonders of our National Parks system, Ken embodies the spirit of the Records of Achievement Award. With this award, we honor Ken’s expert use of primary source materials, including those held by the National Archives, and his

tireless efforts to engage everyday citizens in an exploration of our shared history.”

"It is fitting that we honor Ken Burns, who taught us so much about the Civil War, on the eve of the opening of the second part the National Archives' landmark 'Discovering the Civil War' exhibition," said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero. "Using original documents and photographs from the National Archives, Ken brought a human dimension to the struggles and hardships of that war. We are so pleased to pay tribute to Ken and to welcome to the Archives the chair of the Gala, Morgan Freeman, whose narrations of the works of escaped slave and abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass brought so much to Ken's series, *The Civil War*."

Since his Academy Award-nominated *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1981, Burns has directed and produced some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, including *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson*, *Mark Twain*, *Baseball*, *Jazz*, *The Civil War*, and *The War*. This year, PBS aired Burns's *The Tenth Inning*, an update to his 1994 epic *Baseball*. He is currently working on a three-part, six-hour history of Prohibition, tentatively scheduled for PBS broadcast in 2011.

Burns, who is also a Vice President of the Foundation for the National Archives, has made significant use of the Archives' vast holdings in his film projects, educating millions about the treasure of records held in trust for the American people.

"I have tremendous respect for Ken Burns and his work as a historian and as a documentary filmmaker," Freeman said. "So it's my honor to congratulate him on his big night."

The Foundation's annual Gala celebrates the public-private partnership between the National Archives and Records Administration and the Foundation for the National Archives, which was created to support the development of programs, technology, exhibits, and educational materials based on the billions of records held by the Archives.

In addition to Foundation President Ken Lore and his wife Pat, and Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero and his wife Gail Zimmermann, the exclusive evening event drew distinguished guests from Washington's civic and cultural community, including U.S. Chief Information Officer Vivek Kundra, U.S. Sen. and Mrs. Lamar Alexander, Thurgood Marshall Jr. and his wife, Teddi Levy Marshall, Bill Couper of Bank of America Mid-Atlantic, Josh Hanna of Ancestry.com, David Pryor Jr. of Microsoft and his wife Judith Pryor, and Paula Collins of Texas Instruments.

Other attendees included Foundation Board members Sue Gin McGowan, Cokie Roberts, and A'Lelia Bundles, and Bitsey Folger and husband Sidney Werkman, and past presidents of the Foundation Larry O'Brien and wife Helen, and Tom Wheeler and wife Carol.

“Ken Burns is one of America's greatest storytellers,” said Bill Couper, Mid-Atlantic president, Bank of America. “His work as an historian and filmmaker has brought the past to life for millions of people in America and around the world. All of us at Bank of America are honored to have the opportunity to support his artistic visions.”

This year's Gala was sponsored by Bank of America, with additional support from the Maris S. Cuneo Foundation and The Boeing Company.

### **About the Foundation for the National Archives**

The Foundation for the National Archives is an independent nonprofit that serves as the National Archives' private-sector partner in the creation of and ongoing support of the National Archives Experience, which includes permanent exhibits, educational programs, traveling exhibits, special events and film screenings, educational literature, and historical/records-related products and media. The Foundation helps the public understand the importance of the holdings of the National Archives by presenting the depth and diversity of the records through award-winning, interactive educational exhibits and programs. It generates financial and creative support for the National Archives Experience from individuals, foundations, and corporations who share a belief in the importance of innovative civics education.

### **About the National Archives Experience**

The National Archives Experience, created by the National Archives in partnership with the Foundation for the National Archives, has transformed the visitor experience at the National Archives' Washington, DC building, and includes a renovated Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom, the award-winning Public Vaults permanent interactive exhibition, the William G. McGowan Theater, the Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery for special exhibits, the Boeing Learning Center, and the Digital Vaults online exhibit. These components make the rich resources of the National Archives accessible to Americans nationwide.

### **About Bank of America**

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