



News Release

December 11, 2012

National Archives to Launch 150th Anniversary Celebration Supported By Lead Sponsor Verizon Foundation

Foundation for the National Archives Receives \$150,000 Grant

Washington, DC – December 11, 2012 – The Foundation for the National Archives is pleased to announce that the Verizon Foundation will be the lead sponsor of the National Archives' 150th Anniversary celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Verizon Foundation has presented the Foundation for the National Archives with a \$150,000 grant in support of the anniversary celebration, which kicks off a year-long series of events and programs at the Archives. These activities include special exhibits of President Abraham Lincoln's original Emancipation Proclamation, as well as related family activities, panel discussions, author lectures and film programs.

A Host Committee for the year-long celebration will be chaired by Congressman and Civil Rights leader John Lewis.

"We are thrilled that the Verizon Foundation has agreed to serve as lead sponsor of this exciting year of 150th Anniversary events celebrating one of the most important documents of American history," said A'Lelia Bundles, President of the Foundation for the National Archives. "This generous gift will enable the Foundation to support our partners at the National Archives by promoting the rare display of President Lincoln's original Emancipation Proclamation and introducing new audiences to the incredible work of the Archives."

Verizon's sponsorship will support the Foundation's efforts to publicize the anniversary year events and to develop related educational resources.

Rose Stuckey Kirk, president of the Verizon Foundation, said, "The issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation stands as one of the defining moments during a tumultuous period in our nation's history. We at Verizon are honored to support the celebration of the 150th anniversary of this historic document."

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863, during the American Civil War, formally proclaiming the freedom of all slaves held in areas still in revolt. The Proclamation clarified and strengthened the position of the Union government, decreased the likelihood of European

support of the Confederacy and, as the Union armies extended their occupation of the southern states, brought freedom to the slaves in those states. The Proclamation also invited black men to join the Union Army and Navy, resulting in the enlistment of approximately 200,000 African Americans before the war's end.

Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not end slavery throughout the nation, it placed the issue squarely on top of the wartime agenda. It added moral force to the Union cause and was a significant milestone leading to the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1865, formally outlawing slavery nationwide.

To limit the fragile document's exposure to light, the original Emancipation Proclamation is displayed for only a few days each year. A high-resolution facsimile of the document is on display year round in the National Archives Experience's "Public Vaults" exhibition.

To mark the anniversary, the National Archives will present a free special display of the original Emancipation Proclamation from December 30, 2012, through January 1, 2013, in the Archives' East Rotunda Gallery. The Gallery will remain open to the public late on New Year's Eve, with an 11:30 p.m. Watch Night performance by Washington Revels Heritage Voices and a midnight bell ringing by Harriet Tubman, portrayed by a historical re-enactor.

On New Year's Day, Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, musician, song talker, and scholar, will perform a dramatic reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. Family activities will follow.

Beginning in December and continuing throughout 2013, the Archives plans related films, author lectures, and panel discussions, including one on January 24, about the destruction of slavery in the United States. The panel discussion will be moderated by Annette Gordon Reed, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Professor of Law and History at Harvard University. Panelists include historians James McPherson, Eric Foner, Edward Ayers, and James Oaks,

All events will be held at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., on Constitution Avenue at 9th Street, N.W. The building is Metro accessible on the Yellow and Green lines at the Archives/Navy Memorial/Penn Quarter station. To verify program dates and times, call the National Archives Public Programs Line at 202 357-5000, or view the [Calendar of Events](#) online.

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About The National Archives

The National Archives and Records Administration is an independent Federal agency that serves American democracy by safeguarding and preserving the records of our Government, ensuring that the people can discover, use, and learn from this documentary heritage. The National Archives ensures continuing

access to the essential documentation of the rights of American citizens and the actions of their government. From the Declaration of Independence to accounts of ordinary Americans, the holdings of the National Archives directly touch the lives of millions of people. The agency supports democracy, promote civic education, and facilitate historical understanding of our national experience. The National Archives carries out its mission through a nationwide network of archives, records centers, and Presidential Libraries, and on the Internet at www.archives.gov.

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 Verizon Foundation

The Verizon Foundation is focused on accelerating social change by using the company's innovative technology to help solve pressing problems in education, health care and energy management. Since 2000, the Verizon Foundation has invested more than half a billion dollars to improve the communities where Verizon employees work and live. Verizon's employees are generous with their donations and their time, having logged more than 6.2 million hours of service to make a positive difference in their communities. For more information about Verizon's philanthropic work, visit www.verizonfoundation.org; or for regular updates, visit the Foundation on Facebook (www.facebook.com/theverizonfoundation) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/verizongiving).

The Host Committee for the National Archives' Emancipation Proclamation 150th Anniversary Commemoration is a distinguished group of civic and community leaders, historians, authors, journalists, and celebrities drawn together by their love of history and their dedication to assisting the National Archives and its Foundation in increasing awareness of the important work of our nation's official record keeper. Chaired by civil rights leader and Congressman John Lewis, the honorary Host Committee also includes such notables as NBC News Special Correspondent Tom Brokaw; Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi;

National Museum of African American History and Culture Director Lonnie Bunch, "The Civil War" Director Ken Burns; Libby O'Connell of the History Channel; Harvard University President Drew Gilpin Faust; actor Morgan Freeman; Henry Louis Gates, director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research; and Alfre Woodard of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Many members of the Host Committee will participate in related National Archives public programs in December 2012, and throughout 2013.

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