

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER TO HOST BASEBALL AS AMERICA FROM COOPERSTOWN'S NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

Philadelphia, PA – Since the often-dubbed “great American sport” first took shape in this country, baseball and America have mirrored the same values, responded to the same events, and grappled with the same social and economic issues. From February 15 through May 11, 2008, the National Constitution Center will host ***Baseball As America***, the first major exhibition to examine the relationship between baseball and American culture. The 6,000-square-foot exhibition is organized by The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York, and marks the first time the treasures of the Hall of Fame have left their legendary home to tour the country.

The national tour of *Baseball As America* is sponsored by Ernst & Young LLP. The exhibition is presented locally by Chevrolet. CBS 3 is the official media partner for the Center’s showing of *Baseball As America* and the Philadelphia Phillies are a promotional partner for the exhibition.

Baseball As America represents the richness of baseball as the great American pastime and celebrates enduring American values: freedom, patriotism, opportunity, and ingenuity. In exploring immigration, nationalism, industrialization, integration, and popular culture, the exhibition reveals how baseball has served as both a public reflection of, and catalyst for, the evolution of American culture and society.

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The exhibition provides a revealing, inspiring, humorous, and dramatic perspective on “America's game” and, in so doing, fosters a new appreciation not only of baseball, but of our national character. As much a symbol of our country as apple pie, baseball has inspired intergenerational storytelling that endures to this day. Similar to the experience of visiting a museum, the experience of watching a baseball game with one’s parents, children, or grandchildren has fostered many family conversations – about life, sports, and the times in which we’ve lived. It’s not hard to imagine a man relaying to his grandchildren the experience of seeing Jackie Robinson play and then telling a story about other civil rights milestones such as Rosa Parks’ famous bus ride.

“From children playing catch for the first time to avid baseball fans, this exhibition – much like the sport itself – will appeal to a wide range of visitors spanning generations, backgrounds, and interests,” said National Constitution Center President and CEO Joseph M. Torsella. “I look forward to bringing my children to see this exhibit to share with them the incredible bond that baseball provides.”

The exhibition is divided into seven sections, each addressing a series of related ideas and issues that reveal the impact of baseball on American culture: Our National Spirit, Rooting for the Team, Sharing a Common Culture, Ideals and Injustices, Enterprise & Opportunity, Invention and Ingenuity, and Weaving Myths.

Baseball As America includes over 500 of the Museum’s most precious artifacts, dating from baseball’s early roots in the 19th century to today, ranging from uniforms, balls, bats, and gloves, to books, recordings, artwork, and films, to historic documents, advertising, and ephemera. Highlights include:

- The Doubleday Ball from baseball’s mythic first game in 1839
- Jackie Robinson’s 1956 Brooklyn Dodgers jersey
- A variety of artifacts from the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League
- Record-setting bats from the Mark McGwire-Sammy Sosa home run chase of 1998, as well as those of Babe Ruth (home run #60 in 1927) and Roger Maris (home run #61 in 1961)
- FDR’s January 15, 1942 “Green Light” letter calling for the continuation of professional baseball as a way to heighten morale during World War II
- Norman Rockwell’s 1949 painting, *The Three Umpires*

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ADD TWO/BASEBALL LEAD RELEASE

- The “Wonder Boy” bat from the movie *The Natural*
- A 1908 Thomas Edison recording of “Casey at the Bat”
- “Shoeless” Joe Jackson’s shoes
- And the most valuable baseball card in the world, the T206 Honus Wagner

“Baseball and America have grown up together. In fact, the game is such an integral part of our culture that we often take for granted its deep day-to-day significance in our lives,” notes Jane Forbes Clark, Chairman of the Board of The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. “In bringing this exhibition to people across the country, it is our hope that we can learn more about ourselves as a people who possess a shared set of values, as reflected in our national game.”

The exhibition also includes a special case dedicated to baseball history in Philadelphia, created by The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Artifacts from 19th century baseball in Philadelphia, the Negro Leagues, the Philadelphia A’s, and the Philadelphia Phillies are featured. Highlights include:

- A ball from the earliest known inter-Philadelphia match between the Mercantile BBC and the Continentals in 1860
- Rube Waddell’s glove from defeating Cy Young in 21 innings on July 4, 1905
- Belt Buckle from the 1923 Eastern Colored League Champs
- Connie Mack Day program from Shibe Park, 1941
- Richie Ashburn’s spikes, c. 1950
- Phillies 1980 World Series ring
- Steve Carlton’s jersey from his 300th win in 1983
- Mike Schmidt’s bat from his 536th homerun, tying Mickey Mantle on June 17, 1988
- Jimmy Rollins’ helmet from his 36-game hit streak in 2005
- Chase Utley’s spikes from his 35-game hit streak in 2006

In addition, all sections of the *Baseball As America* exhibition that pertain to Philadelphia sports history will be denoted with a special label. Visitors can use a guide of the Philadelphia highlights to direct them through the exhibit. The final section of the exhibit will also include large photographs of great moments in Philadelphia baseball history.

Other images featured at the end of the exhibition highlight presidents at baseball games throughout history, including President Taft as the first president to throw the first pitch at

ADD THREE/BASEBALL LEAD RELEASE

a game on April 14, 1910; President Woodrow Wilson as the first president to throw the first pitch at a World Series game when the Phillies played the Red Sox in 1915; and images of more recent presidents such as Kennedy, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush.

One of the unique aspects of the Center's permanent exhibition is the use of live actors to tell stories in a compelling way. The Center has also incorporated a live actor in the *Baseball As America* exhibit. Families will have the opportunity to travel back in time for a glimpse at the baseball world of the past when they meet captivating columnist Randy Dixon, the key sports source for readers of *The Philadelphia Tribune* in the 1930s. Dixon will interact with visitors every half hour between 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays from February 16 through May 3.

The Center is working with the African American Museum in Philadelphia on joint promotions to tie *Baseball As America* to their traveling exhibition, *Discover Greatness: Illustrated history of Negro League Baseball: 1900-1947*.

To further augment the exhibition, the Center's education and public programming staff in the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach will develop a variety of resource materials, special programs, and family activities.

Also in keeping with the Center's mission to foster discussion and citizen engagement, a variety of evening programs discussing current and historical topics that relate to the exhibition will be planned.

Admission to *Baseball As America* is \$15 for adults, \$14 for seniors ages 65 and up, and \$9 for children ages 4-12. Active military personnel and children ages 3 and under are free. Group rates are also available. Admission to the Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, including the award-winning theater production "Freedom Rising", is included. iPod audio tours are also available and cost \$2 for members and \$3 for non-members. For ticket information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum preserves history, honors excellence, and connects generations. An independent, not-for-profit educational institution dedicated to fostering an appreciation of the historical development of baseball and its impact on our culture, the Hall of Fame was established in Cooperstown, New York in 1939 as the definitive repository of the game's treasures. Comprised of the Museum, with over 35,000 three-dimensional artifacts, and the Library and Archive, which houses more than 2.6 million documents, 10,000 hours of recordings, and 500,000 photographs, the Hall of Fame exhibits and interprets its vast collections for a global audience. The Hall of Fame also bestows the highest individual honor awarded to players of our national pastime by marking their achievements with a plaque in the Hall of Fame Gallery. For more information on the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, please call 888-HALL-OF-FAME, or visit us on the web at www.baseballhall.org.

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The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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