

# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

525 Arch Street | Independence Mall  
Philadelphia | PA 19106 | T 215 409 6600 | F 215 409 6650  
[www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Ashley Berke  
Senior Public Relations Manager  
215.409.6693  
[aberke@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:aberke@constitutioncenter.org)

**LAST CHANCE TO SEE**  
***AMERICA I AM: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN IMPRINT***  
**AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER**  
***Popular Exhibition Ends World Premiere Run on May 3***

Philadelphia, PA (April 9, 2009) – Now in its final weeks at the National Constitution Center, visitors will not want to miss the ***America I AM: The African American Imprint*** exhibition, which made its world debut at the Center on January 15, 2009, and closes on May 3. Since opening, the exhibit has made national headlines. The *New York Times* praised its rare historical artifacts, scholarship, and gripping narrative, declaring: “in the glimpse of trial and triumph, there is an epic story to be told.” Following its run at the Center, *America I AM* will travel to ten cities as part of a four-year tour. The exhibit’s next stop will be the Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center in Georgia.

“From the arrival of the first Africans in Jamestown, to the election of President Barack Obama, *America I AM: The African American Imprint* explores and celebrates the trials and triumphs that illustrate the unique journey of African Americans,” said broadcaster Tavis Smiley, who is presenting the exhibition. “We are thrilled so many people of all ages and backgrounds have had an opportunity to celebrate the diverse contributions African Americans have made to this country, while being reminded that each of us as human beings has an imprint that makes up the American mosaic.”

“The National Constitution Center is proud and honored to have served as the premiere venue for this groundbreaking exhibition,” said National Constitution Center President and CEO Linda E. Johnson. “The Center is dedicated to telling the story of ‘We the People’ in ways that inspire visitors to become active citizens. This exhibition conveys

-MORE-

## ADD ONE/AMERICA I AM LAST CHANCE

the struggles, contributions, and triumphs of African Americans in a way that encourages all Americans to engage in an important cultural and historical dialogue. We hope everyone will take advantage of this final opportunity to visit *America I AM* while it is still in Philadelphia.”

The Center is hosting several events in April in conjunction with *America I AM*. From Saturday, April 4 through Saturday, April 18, visitors can celebrate music and dance during the *America I AM: Voices of Freedom Festival*. From blues to jazz and gospel to hip-hop dancing, the Center will host performances for everyone during this Spring Break celebration. These performances are free with museum admission.

During a special evening event at the Center, historian Raymond Arsenault will tell the story of Marian Anderson and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her 1939 concert at the Lincoln Memorial on the eve of the anniversary – Wednesday, April 8 at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free, but reservations are required at 215.409.6700.

In addition, visitors to *America I AM* can see the special theatrical production “She Went to War,” which illuminates the many struggles and victories experienced by African American women in our nation’s military service and the impact they had on American culture and society. Performances of “She Went to War” are free with museum admission and take place inside the exhibition every Saturday and Sunday in April between 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

*America I AM* is developed in partnership with Tavis Smiley, and is organized by Arts and Exhibitions International (AEI) and Cincinnati Museum Center.

Covering more than 13,000 square feet at the Center, the exhibition presents a historical continuum of pivotal moments in courage, conviction, and creativity that solidifies the undeniable imprint of African Americans across the nation and around the world. The more than 200 artifacts and information within the exhibition provide context to how African Americans have contributed to and shaped American culture across four core

## ADD TWO/AMERICA I AM LAST CHANCE

areas: economic, socio-political, cultural, and spiritual, up to present-day events, including the inauguration of the first African American president.

Visitors experience shared U.S. culture and history through an unprecedented collection of rare historical objects, documents, religion, music, narration, photos, and media that tell this uniquely American story. An interactive area allows visitors to leave their own video “imprints,” and this collection will grow throughout the life of the exhibition with the potential to become the largest recorded oral history project in U.S. history.

Through more than 200 artifacts culled from every period of U.S. history and 12 exhibition galleries, *America I AM* conveys a journey from struggle to triumph to celebration. Among the poignant pieces in the exhibition are:

- “The Doors of No Return” from the Cape Coast Castle in Ghana, which enslaved Africans passed through to board ships to the “New World”
- The typewriter Alex Haley used to write the groundbreaking book, *Roots*
- Objects representing the African American troops that fought and impacted the outcome of major U.S. wars
- Malcolm X’s diary and personal Koran
- The door key and stool from the Birmingham jail cell that held Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. when he authored “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
- Frederick Douglass’ clothing and letter from President Lincoln that enabled him to move among Union lines recruiting black soldiers
- The robe that Muhammad Ali wore during the “Rumble in the Jungle,” where he defeated world heavyweight champion George Foreman
- And many other important items from the beginnings of our nation through contemporary popular culture

Admission to *America I AM* is \$17.50 for adults, \$15.50 for seniors ages 65 and up, and \$9 for children ages 4-12. A voucher for a \$2.50 discount off two adult tickets is available at [www.walmart.com/ourvoice](http://www.walmart.com/ourvoice). 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. Active military personnel and children ages 3 and under are free. There is no upcharge for school groups to tour *America I AM*. For ticket information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

-MORE-

## ADD THREE/AMERICA I AM LAST CHANCE

*America I AM* is made possible by Walmart Stores, Inc., which serves as its presenting sponsor. The exhibition is sponsored by Northern Trust and is presented locally by Coca-Cola. CBS 3 is the official media partner for the Center's showing of *America I AM*. Microsoft is the technology partner for the tour.

### **ABOUT The Smiley Group, Inc.**

Founded in 1998 and based in Los Angeles, The Smiley Group, Inc., (TSG) is a communications corporation dedicated to supporting human rights and related empowerment issues. The mission of TSG is to achieve positive results through advocacy and education on issues of concern to African Americans and other people without substantial economic or social standing. TSG is the holding company for Tavis Smiley Presents, Smiley Radio Properties, High Quality Speakers Bureau, TS Media, and SmileyBooks. The Tavis Smiley Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides leadership development training for youth. Tavis Smiley is the host of *Tavis Smiley* on PBS and *The Tavis Smiley Show from PRI* and the author/editor of 14 books including the *New York Times* best seller *Covenant with Black America*. His latest book is, *Accountable: Making America as Good as its Promise*. For more information, visit [www.tavistalks.com](http://www.tavistalks.com).

### **ABOUT Arts and Exhibitions International (AEI)**

Founded in 2003 by president John Norman and international vice president Andres Numhauser, AEI produces the award-winning exhibition "Diana: A Celebration" in association with the Althorp Estate in the United Kingdom, two touring exhibitions dedicated to the treasures of King Tutankhamun and "Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the Whydah from Slave Ship to Pirate Ship." Norman and Numhauser have nearly 40 years combined experience in the entertainment and exhibition business, working over the years on such projects as "Titanic: The Artifact Exhibit" and "Saint Peter and the Vatican: The Legacy of the Popes." The company has relationships with the most important museums in the world and has presented traveling exhibitions on four continents. AEI is part of AEG Exhibitions, an affiliate division of AEG LIVE. AEG LIVE is a collection of companies dedicated to all aspects of live contemporary music performance and the live-entertainment division of Los Angeles-based AEG, one of the leading sports and entertainment presenters in the world. For more information, log onto [www.artsandexhibitions.com](http://www.artsandexhibitions.com).

### **ABOUT the National Constitution Center**

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

ADD FOUR/AMERICA I AM LAST CHANCE

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](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

**ABOUT Cincinnati Museum Center**

Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal is home to the Cincinnati History Museum, Duke Energy Children's Museum, the Museum of Natural History & Science, the Robert D. Lindner Family OMNIMAX® Theater, and the Cincinnati Historical Society Archives & Library. It is a nationally recognized educational and research resource and one of the top cultural attractions in the Midwest. With more than one million visitors each year, Museum Center is the top cultural attraction in Cincinnati and the most visited museum complex in the State of Ohio. Originally built in 1933 as the Union Terminal train station, the building is a national historic landmark and was renovated and reopened as Cincinnati Museum Center in 1990. For information, call 513-287-7000 or 1-800-733-2077 or visit [www.cincymuseum.org](http://www.cincymuseum.org).

**ABOUT Walmart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT)**

Every week, millions of customers visit Walmart Stores, Supercenters, Neighborhood Markets, and Sam's Club locations across America or log on to its online store at [www.wal-mart.com](http://www.wal-mart.com). The company and its Foundation are committed to a philosophy of giving back locally. Walmart (NYSE:WMT) is proud to support the causes that are important to customers and associates right in their own neighborhoods, and last year gave more than \$270 million to communities in the United States. To learn more, visit [www.walmartfacts.com](http://www.walmartfacts.com), [www.walmartstores.com](http://www.walmartstores.com), or [www.walmartfoundation.org](http://www.walmartfoundation.org).

**ABOUT Northern Trust**

Northern Trust Corporation is a leading provider of investment management, asset and fund administration, fiduciary and banking solutions for corporations, institutions and affluent individuals worldwide. Northern Trust, a financial holding company based in Chicago, has a growing network of 85 offices in 18 U.S. states and has international offices in 15 locations in North America, Europe, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region. As of September 30, 2008, Northern Trust had assets under custody of US\$3.5 trillion, and assets under investment management of US\$652.4 billion. Northern Trust, founded in 1889, has earned distinction as an industry leader in combining exceptional service and expertise with innovative products and technology. For more information, visit <http://www.northerntrust.com>.

**ABOUT Microsoft** Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

**ABOUT CBS 3**

CBS 3 (KYW-TV) and The CW Philly 57 (WPSG-TV) are part of CBS Television Stations, a division of CBS Corporation.

###