



Media Contacts:

Brady Smith, Director of Marketing

412-454-6459

bmsmith@heinzhistorycenter.org

Kim Roberts, Communications Manager

412-454-6382

kmroberts@heinzhistorycenter.org

History Center to Honor Black History Month with Special Programming
-The museum will host a full slate of free programs in February, including a commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Negro League baseball-

PITTSBURGH, Jan. 21, 2020 – The Smithsonian-affiliated Senator John Heinz History Center interprets and preserves African American heritage year-round through a variety of events and exhibitions curated by the museum’s African American Program.

In recognition of Black History Month, the African American Program of the Heinz History Center will present several programs throughout February in collaboration with community partners.

Smithsonian Channel Documentary Screening: “Black in Space: Breaking the Color Barrier”
Monday, Feb. 10

Heinz History Center

6 – 8:15 p.m.

The History Center will partner with the Smithsonian Channel to host an exclusive preview screening of the Smithsonian Channel documentary “Black in Space: Breaking the Color Barrier,” followed by a panel discussion. This documentary charts the United States’ efforts to send the first African American astronaut into space at the height of the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement. This program is free and open to the public. Registration will open at heinzhistorycenter.org/events in late January.

Negro League Centennial Commemoration

Presented in partnership with the Pittsburgh Pirates, Josh Gibson Foundation, and Carnegie Museum of Art

Thursday, Feb. 13

Heinz History Center

6 – 8:30 p.m.

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Negro League baseball, the Heinz History Center is partnering with the Pittsburgh Pirates, Josh Gibson Foundation, and Carnegie Museum of Art to host an engaging panel discussion. Feb. 13 marks exactly 100 years since the Negro National League – the first African American professional baseball league – was established at a YMCA in Kansas City, Mo. The evening program will examine the legacy and impact of the Negro League in Pittsburgh with an all-star panel featuring:

- Al Oliver, Pittsburgh Pirates All-Star outfielder and member of the 1971 World Series Champion team;
- Sean Gibson, executive director, Josh Gibson Foundation; great-grandson of the legendary slugger;

- Rob Ruck, professor of history, University of Pittsburgh; author of “Raceball”;
- Samuel W Black, director of the African American Program at the Heinz History Center; and
- Charlene Foggie-Barnett, Teenie Harris Archive Specialist, Carnegie Museum of Art.

The panel will be moderated by Pittsburgh Pirates play-by-play announcer Joe Block. Admission to this event is free. Registration is required by Feb. 7 at heinzhistorycenter.org/events.

Annual Black History Month Lecture with Sowande Mustakeem

Wednesday, Feb. 19

Heinz History Center

6 – 8 p.m.

The African American Program’s sixth annual Black History Month Lecture will feature Sowande Mustakeem, Ph.D., author of “Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage.” She will present the lecture “Freedom’s Blood Memories: Slavery, Terror, and the Evolution of Black History.” Mustakeem is associate professor of History and African American Studies at Washington University, St. Louis. Admission to this event is free but does not include access to museum exhibitions. Please register online at heinzhistorycenter.org/events.

From Slavery to Freedom Film Series: “What Does Trouble Mean? Nate Smith’s Revolution” *Presented in partnership with Robert Morris University*

Wednesday, Feb. 26

Heinz History Center

5:30 – 8 p.m.

The *From Slavery to Freedom* Film Series examines themes from the History Center’s award-winning exhibition through the presentation of film screenings throughout the year. Part of the 2020 film series, “What Does Trouble Mean? Nate Smith’s Revolution” follows the journey of Black laborer Nate Smith and his unexpected evolution into charismatic leadership, as he forced the integration of Pittsburgh’s construction trade unions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Produced by Robert Morris University Center for Documentary Production & Study, this one-hour documentary chronicles the beginning of the Black Construction Coalition and speaks to the economic rights of Pittsburgh’s Black citizens. Admission is free, and registration is not required.

Long-Term Exhibits Highlight African American Heritage in Western Pa.

In addition to Black History Month programs, African American history is on display daily within the History Center’s six floors of exhibitions:

- The History Center’s award-winning *From Slavery to Freedom* exhibition explores more than 250 years of African American history. Presented by **BNY Mellon**, this long-term exhibit highlights the enslavement of Africans and its impact on the American economy, the history of the anti-slavery movement, the Underground Railroad, and the impact of 19th-century activism on the modern quest for civil and human rights in Pittsburgh.
- The long-term exhibition *Pittsburgh: A Tradition of Innovation* highlights local African American history, featuring a re-created Crawford Grill with artifacts from Pittsburgh jazz legends such as Mary Lou Williams, Stanley Turrentine, and George Benson; and a WWII display highlighting the Pittsburgh Courier’s Double V Campaign and local Tuskegee Airmen.
- The **Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum** showcases Pittsburgh’s unmatched Negro League baseball legacy with artifacts including a rare Homestead Grays uniform.

- The **Special Collections Gallery** features a collection of artifacts from local African Americans, including legendary photographer Charles “Teenie” Harris’ camera, a 20-foot 1941 Cadillac funeral hearse from the historic Gaines Funeral Home, and original garments created by West African immigrant Dosina Blemahdo.

MEDIA NOTE: Samuel W Black, the History Center’s Director of African American Programs, is available for interviews to discuss these exhibits, events, and the importance of preserving African American history in Western Pa.

The Senator John Heinz History Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and the largest history museum in Pennsylvania, presents American history with a Western Pennsylvania connection. The Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum is a museum within a museum, comprehensively presenting the region’s remarkable sports story through hundreds of artifacts and interactive experiences for visitors of all ages. The History Center and Sports Museum are located at 1212 Smallman Street in the city’s Strip District, and are open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The History Center’s museum system includes the Sports Museum; the Fort Pitt Museum in historic Point State Park; and Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, a National Historic Landmark located in Avella, Pa. in Washington County. More information is available at www.heinzhistorycenter.org.



The Heinz History Center will honor Black History Month with a full slate of programs throughout February, including a commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Negro League baseball on Feb. 13. (Pictured: 1928 Pittsburgh Crawfords at Ammon Field in Pittsburgh’s Hill District.)

#