

# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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## THE LIFE OF IDA B. WELLS AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE DISCUSSED AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

PHILADELPHIA, PA (February 26, 2009) – As part of the National Constitution Center’s special programming in conjunction with the world debut of the **America I AM: *The African American Imprint*** exhibition, historian **Mia Bay** and Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Pamela Newkirk** will discuss the extraordinary life of journalist Ida B. Wells and the African American freedom struggle on Thursday, March 19, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free, but reservations are required and can be made by calling 215.409.6700.

Born to slaves in 1862, Ida B. Wells became a fearless anti-lynching crusader, women’s rights advocate, journalist, and public speaker. When she was forcibly ejected from her train seat in 1883, her struggle for justice began; Wells immediately sued and won in the local courts only to lose on appeal in the Supreme Court of Tennessee. Her published account of her legal challenge to Jim Crow, however, launched her on a career as an outspoken journalist and social activist. Though Wells’ refusal to accept any compromise on racial inequality labeled her a “dangerous radical” in her day, it made her a model for later civil rights activists, as well as a powerful influence for women in journalism.

**Mia Bay** is an associate professor of history at Rutgers University and the associate director of the Center for Race and Ethnicity at Rutgers. Her upcoming book, *To Tell the Truth Freely: The Life of Ida B. Wells*, describes how Wells helped define the role of civil rights activist for every generation that followed. Bay is also the author of *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925*.

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ADD ONE/IDA B. WELLS PROGRAM

**Pamela Newkirk** is the author of *Within the Veil: Black Journalists, White Media*, which was awarded the National Press Club Award for Media Criticism. She is also the author of the upcoming book, *Letters from Black America*. Newkirk has worked as a daily journalist at four different news organizations, including *New York Newsday*, where she was among the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporting team for spot news in 1990. Her primary areas of interest are race in the news media and African American art and culture.

*The Philadelphia Inquirer's* **Sandra D. Long** will moderate the program. Long is Vice President of Newsroom Operations for Philadelphia Media Holdings. She has been on the staff of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* since 1984, and has also worked for *The Philadelphia Bulletin* and *The Wilmington, Delaware News Journal*. Long is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2007 Trailblazer Award from the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists and the 2006 Candace Award from the South Jersey chapter of the National Coalition of Black Women. She is also a founding member of the National Association of Black Journalists.

A book sale and signing will follow the program, courtesy of Joseph Fox Bookshop.

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

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