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CONTACT: Denise Venuti Free  
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[dvfree@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:dvfree@constitutioncenter.org)**NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER LAUNCHES  
CITIZENS' CONSTITUTIONAL CONVERSATIONS***Underwritten by Citizens Bank Foundation****Inaugural Program to Feature Jim Lehrer***

Philadelphia, PA (April 15, 2005) – The National Constitution Center is pleased to announce the induction of a new program series, *Citizens' Constitutional Conversations*, underwritten by Citizens Bank Foundation. "The Franklin Affair," featuring PBS anchor Jim Lehrer, kicks off the series on Wednesday, May 11, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. Including "The Franklin Affair," the Constitution Center will host six *Citizens' Constitutional Conversations* each year.

In this first *Citizens' Constitutional Conversation*, National Constitution Center President and CEO Richard Stengel will speak with Lehrer about his research for his latest novel, *The Franklin Affair*, his views on Franklin, and reasons why a 21st century journalist is drawn to creating an 18th century setting for his work.

Lehrer's *The Franklin Affair* chronicles protagonist R. Taylor, who, after arriving in colonial Philadelphia for Benjamin Franklin's funeral, learns that a letter has been left to him with a monumental secret—Franklin committed a heinous crime that no one knows about. Taylor struggles with a discovery that could alter the way we know American history. Franklin biographer Walter Isaacson has called *The Franklin Affair* an "amazing, historically-savvy and revealing" novel.

Seating is limited, and reservations are required. The program costs \$6 for students, \$9 for members and \$12 for non-members. For tickets or more information, please call (215) 409-6700.

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## ADD ONE/CITIZENS' CONVERSATION WITH JIM LEHRER

This program is a prelude to additional programming to accompany the Constitution Center's upcoming exhibit, *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*, on display December 15, 2005 through April 30, 2006.

Upcoming *Citizens' Constitutional Conversations* include "Becoming Harry Blackmun" with *New York Times* reporter Linda Greenhouse on Wednesday, May 18, 2005, and "Stirring the Pots in American Politics" with Donna Brazile on Tuesday, June 22, 2005.

Jim Lehrer is the author of 15 novels. He is the executive editor and anchor of "The News Hour with Jim Lehrer" on PBS, and a 1999 recipient of a National Humanities Medal for his journalism and writing. During the last four presidential elections, Lehrer has served as a moderator for nine debates. He lives in Washington, D.C., with his novelist wife, Kate. They have three daughters.

### **About the Citizens Bank Foundation**

The Citizens Bank Foundation is the principal charitable contributions vehicle of Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania. The foundation's support is focused on housing, community development and basic human needs.

### **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 its relevance to Americans' daily lives. Opened on July 4, 2003, 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 and debates, and as a home for visiting scholars. Also, serving as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional debate, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. The museum is open seven days a week, and admission is \$7 for adults and \$5 for seniors ages 62 and up, children ages 4-12, and military personnel. Group rates are also available. For more information, call 215.409.6600 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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