

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

525 Arch Street | Independence Mall
Philadelphia | PA 19106 | T 215 409 6600 | F 215 409 6650
www.constitutioncenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS: Ashley Berke
Director of Public Relations
215.409.6693
aberke@constitutioncenter.org

Lauren Saul
Public Relations Manager
215.409.6895
lsaul@constitutioncenter.org

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR TO JOIN IN CONSTITUTION DAY FESTIVITIES ON SEPTEMBER 16 AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

Constitution Day activities sponsored by Amway

Free admission to the museum, courtesy of Beneficial Bank

Philadelphia, PA (August 29, 2011) – Two hundred and twenty four years after its signing, the U.S. Constitution continues to make headlines. Signed on September 17, 1787, the document established the many inherent rights and freedoms "We the People" enjoy today. This year, the **National Constitution Center's Constitution Day celebration** will take place on Friday, September 16, 2011, featuring a wide array of inspiring and educational activities, and the unveiling of a rare constitutional document. **Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor** will join the Center to participate in several engaging events, including a reading of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution and a naturalization ceremony. Amway is the national presenting sponsor of Constitution Day at the National Constitution Center and lead underwriter of *Constitution Hall Pass: Freedom of Expression*, a free, educational webcast broadcast to classrooms around the country. Admission to the Center is **FREE** on Friday, September 16, courtesy of Beneficial Bank, the local presenting sponsor of Constitution Day.

"The U.S. Constitution continues to spark discussion, challenge thought, and inspire action as much today as 224 years ago," said National Constitution Center President and CEO David Eisner. "When it comes to American politics, policy and justice, every day is Constitution Day. Still, it is great to have one day set aside for 'We the People' to remember how central the Constitution remains in our lives."

"The Constitution articulates our democratic system and our fundamental rights," said Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, "but it is 'We the People' who guarantee their survival. Today, in schools

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all around our nation, young people are learning to become tomorrow's citizens. As my colleague David Eisner suggests, however, every day should be Constitution Day - especially in our schools."

"Amway is proud to present National Constitution Day," says Jori Hartwig, Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer of Amway. "Through our partnership with the National Constitution Center, students across the country will learn how the signing of the Constitution by our Founding Fathers directly impacts their lives and their freedoms today. Amway joined in this celebration because everyday we champion the freedom of America's citizens by empowering people to live better lives through our products and business opportunity."

"As the oldest and largest bank headquartered in Philadelphia, we are proud to partner with the National Constitution Center to mark this historic event in our nation's history and have the Beneficial Foundation provide free admission to the Center to everyone who wishes to celebrate with us," said Gerard P. Cuddy, President & CEO of Beneficial Bank. "We are a company that is passionate about education. We are inspired by the National Constitution Center's mission of educating citizens about our nation's history and how our Founding Fathers' ideals continue to shape who we are as a country today. I encourage everyone to visit the National Constitution Center, free of charge, on September 16 and partake in the wide-range of educational events planned for Constitution Day."

Beginning on Constitution Day, visitors to the Center will have the opportunity to view the '**Birth Certificate of the Constitution**', an original John Dunlop copy of a resolution stating that the United States Congress had 'Resolved Unanimously' September 28, 1787, to transmit the Convention Committee report (Constitution) to the several Legislatures. "Without this compromise resolution the Constitution's eventual ratification would not have been set in motion," says Tom Lingenfelter, historian and president of Heritage Collectors' Society in Doylestown, PA. This rare artifact will be on view in the Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, through October 7, 2011. There are only three other known copies in existence, one of which resides at the National Archives in Washington, DC. Lingenfelter will provide context and historical insight for visitors to the Center during gallery talks on Constitution Day.

The kick off the Center's Constitution Day festivities, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day

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O'Connor will lead 224 students from Constitution High School in a rousing **reading of the Preamble** at 8:45 a.m. on the Center's Outdoor Terrace to honor the 224th anniversary of the Constitution's signing.

Following the reading, the **National Conference on Citizenship** (NCoC) will unveil the findings of the 2011 Civic Life in America report during a press conference at 9:30 a.m. in the John C. Bogle Chairman's Room. The Civic Life in America report is produced through a partnership between NCoC and the Corporation for National and Community Service, and tracks and measures the civic habits of Americans in an effort to strengthen civic participation in communities across the country. Additionally, a new report on civic learning entitled "Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools" will be released by NCoC, the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, Annenberg Foundation, and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). Justice O'Connor also will participate in the event to discuss the release of the "Guardian of Democracy" report and her web-based civic education project, **iCivics**, designed to provide young people with the right tools to become active participants in our democracy. Guests can learn more about iCivics during day-long demonstrations in the Center's Grand Hall Lobby.

At 10:00 a.m., the late **Abel Meeropol**, a Jewish high-school teacher from the Bronx who penned the hauntingly powerful, pre-Civil Rights movement poem "Strange Fruit," will be added to the **American National Tree**, a popular exhibit inside *The Story of We the People* that tells the stories of 100 Americans whose actions have helped write the story of the Constitution. A response to the racist brutality against African Americans, Meeropol set the words of his poem to music, with the legendary jazz singer Billie Holiday serving as vocalist. Meeropol also is known for adopting the two sons of accused spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg after their 1953 execution. The National Constitution Center, in collaboration with the [Alliance for Young Artists & Writers](#), the nonprofit that administers the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, selected high school student Ruthie Prillaman of Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville, Maryland, as the winner of the 2011 M.R. Robinson National Constitution Center American National Tree Award. Prillaman wrote the biography of Meeropol that will be featured in the exhibit.

At 10:30 a.m., a public **Naturalization Ceremony** will take place in the Center's F.M. Kirby Auditorium, during which immigrants from across the globe will take the Oath of Citizenship to officially become citizens of the United States. **The Honorable Cynthia M. Rufe**, District Judge

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for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, will administer the oath and introduce special guest speakers Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and **Gerda Weissmann Klein**, a Holocaust survivor and proud naturalized citizen who founded Citizenship Counts.

At 12:00 p.m., the Center's summer-long **George Washington Twitter campaign** (@GeorgeInPhilly) will conclude with an appearance by Washington himself (portrayed by historical interpreter Dean Malissa) on the Center's Grand Hall Overlook. In connection with the Center's *Discover the Real George Washington: New Views from Mount Vernon* exhibition, America's first president spent the summer tweeting from locations throughout the Philadelphia region where he spent time during the summer of 1787 as chair of the Constitutional Convention.

National Constitution Center President & CEO David Eisner, Beneficial Bank President Gerry Cuddy, Amway Vice President of Marketing Jori Hartwig, and President George Washington will then serve as hosts for a patriotic **Birthday Party** at 12:15 p.m. on the Center's Grand Hall Overlook. Visitors can enjoy a slice of cake and sing "Happy Birthday" to the U.S. Constitution!

From 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., **Christopher Phillips**, author of *Constitution Café*, will lead students from Philadelphia's Constitution High School in a dialogue inspired by the idea that the Constitution should be updated to reflect the current times. Students will discuss what they would (and wouldn't) change about the Constitution, if they had the opportunity to rewrite it today. This program is presented in partnership with the Philadelphia Federal Executive Board and the National Archives at Philadelphia.

At 2:00 p.m., renowned George Washington interpreter **Dean Malissa** will recount the creation of the Constitution through the eyes of the nation's first president during **George Washington: The Story of a Man and Nation** in the F.M. Kirby Auditorium. As presider of the Constitutional Convention, Washington's leadership and guidance proved invaluable in creating the greatest expression of statesmanship and compromise ever written.

In addition, a variety of **hands-on activities** will take place throughout the day in the Center's Grand Hall Lobby. Guests can visit the Center's old-fashioned print shop, complete with a replica printing press from the 1700s, to print a copy of the Preamble in the same way Claypool

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and Dunlap did when they printed the Constitution, or join in calligraphy demonstrations and learn about the Copperplate technique used to pen the official, handwritten Constitution. Then, using their newly acquired calligraphy skills, guests can try their hand at signing a giant version of the U.S. Constitution, adding their own signature next to those of our Founding Fathers. A special keepsake, visitors also can take home an authentic silhouette portrait of themselves made by a silhouette artist.

During special, **interactive programs**, guests can put their knowledge of the Constitution to the test with the fast-paced Bill of Rights game show and the Separation of Powers show, which includes an educational tug-of-war game among the three branches of government.

The Center's Constitution Day celebration will extend outside the building as well, when local artist and teacher Robert Krauss creates a **larger-than-life chalk rendering of the Constitution** on the Center's front walkway. Visitors can join in the fun by signing their names!

Also participating in the day's activities, the **Daughters of the American Revolution** will engage visitors in the "I Will Read the Constitution" proclamation, which states that participants agree to read the Constitution on Constitution Day and reaffirm the ideals of the Framers. **American Institute for History Education (AIHE)** will serve as a resource for educators and students visiting the Center on Constitution Day. AIHE's mission is to provide substantive, engaging historical content and activities for teachers to use in their classrooms that will dramatically increase students' comprehension of historical events, personalities, issues, and trends. In addition, the following organizations will be onsite throughout the day: **The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, Progressive Business Publications**, and the **Philadelphia Bar Association**.

Students who cannot visit the Center on Constitution Day can still participate in the celebration with the Center's free webcast, **Constitution Hall Pass** – viewed by over one million students on Constitution Day last year! Classrooms around the country can meet their Constitution Day education requirement by tuning in at www.constitutioncenter.org/constitutionday. This year's episode, *Constitution Hall Pass: Freedom of Expression* brings the story of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights to life and celebrates artists, writers and musicians throughout history who have exercised their right to free expression, and is made possible by **Amway**. Beginning at 7:00 a.m. EST, a member of the Center's education staff will be available online to provide

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additional content and to answer questions.

Additionally, **Channel One News**, the leading television news network for teens, will provide a 15-minute version of the webcast for classroom use via Channel One Connection, a commercial-free educational programming resource available to member schools. Information about *Constitution Hall Pass*, along with supplementary educational resources focused on Constitution Day, also will be available on Channel One's award-winning website at www.ChannelOne.com.

A handy personal and interactive pocket Constitution App for iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch also is available for download by visiting iTunes.

On **Saturday, September 17** at 10:00 a.m., the winners of the "We the People 9.17" contest, hosted by **Constituting America**, a non-profit organization dedicated to education about the U.S. Constitution, will be honored in a ceremony in the F.M. Kirby Auditorium. Actress Janine Turner and Cathy Gillespie, co-chairs of Constituting America, will award scholarships and prizes to students from across the country who submitted essays, short films, public service announcements, and original songs on the U.S. Constitution. Throughout the weekend, the Center will feature the winning entries in the Grand Hall Lobby and the Grand Hall Overlook. The Constituting America website www.constitutingamerica.org features such innovative resources as kids talking to kids about the U.S. Constitution in a fun-filled documentary, Patriot Clubs, archived essays for adults and kids on the U.S. Constitution and Federalist Papers, a youth blog, and signup and contest rules for the 2012 "We The People 9.17" contest.

The Center continues to serve as the nation's central resource for education on the Constitution through its **Constitution Day website** at www.constitutioncenter.org/constitutionday. This interactive site provides a variety of resources to help educators, students, community leaders, and government officials fulfill the national mandate sponsored by the late Senator Robert Byrd, requiring all schools receiving federal funding and all federal agencies to provide constitutional education on or around September 17. The website includes educational resources and lesson plans, online versions of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' naturalization test, video clips of Constitution Day events at the Center and previous Constitution Hall Pass episodes, and the "Which Founder Are You?" quiz, which allows users to compare their personality traits with those of the men who wrote the Constitution.

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Additionally, educators can purchase the Center's **Constitution Day Kit**, which includes a 31" x 55" laminated copy of the Constitution, 35 folding pocket Constitutions, a "Creating the Constitution" DVD, the "To Sign or Not To Sign" lesson plan (differentiated for elementary, middle and high school grade levels), and a dry erase marker for signing the Constitution. The kit costs \$35 and is available at www.constitutioncenter.org/constitutionday.

Located on Independence Mall in Historic Philadelphia, the National Constitution Center is America's first and only nonprofit, nonpartisan institution devoted to the U.S. Constitution. As a cutting-edge museum, national town hall and educational facility, the Center illuminates constitutional ideals and inspires acts of citizenship through must-see multimedia exhibitions, live performances, timely public programs and dynamic educational resources. The museum dramatically tells the story of "We the People" through more than 100 interactive exhibits, films, photographs and rare artifacts; the stirring theatrical performance *Freedom Rising*; and the iconic attraction *Signers' Hall*, featuring 42 life-sized bronze statues of the Founding Fathers. As America's town hall for constitutional dialogue, the Center regularly engages political leaders, scholars, pundits and journalists of diverse viewpoints. The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education and provides exceptional civic learning resources both onsite and online. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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