

TAVIS SMILEY PRESENTS



The African American Imprint

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CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER TO HOST WEST COAST DEBUT OF AMERICA I AM: *THE AFRICAN AMERICAN IMPRINT* EXHIBITION Tickets On Sale Today

LOS ANGELES, CA (September 23, 2009) – Los Angeles will be home to the west coast debut of **America I AM: *The African American Imprint***, a touring exhibition presented by broadcaster Tavis Smiley that celebrates nearly 500 years of African American contributions to the U.S. The showing at the California Science Center from October 30, 2009 to April 10, 2010, will be the third stop on the exhibition's 10-city, four-year tour, following Philadelphia's National Constitution Center and the Atlanta Civic Center.

America I AM will be a nearly 13,000 square-foot presentation of pivotal moments in courage, conviction and creativity that celebrate the undeniable imprint of African Americans on our nation and around the world. Through more than 200 rare historic objects, documents, photos and multimedia, visitors can explore how African Americans have contributed to and shaped American culture across four core areas: economic, socio-political, cultural and spiritual. The exhibition relates important events and people from the beginnings of the nation up through the present-day inauguration of the first African American president. Tickets are available beginning today at www.californiasciencecenter.org or 213-744-2019.

America I AM: *The African American Imprint* is developed in partnership with Tavis Smiley, and is organized by Cincinnati Museum Center and Arts and Exhibitions International (AEI), a division of AEG Live. AEI also organized the King Tut exhibition that drew nearly 1 million visitors to LACMA in 2005.

"America I AM: *The African American Imprint* encourages all people to connect in a meaningful way with the foundations of democracy, cultural diversity, exploration, and free enterprise, which began when the first Africans arrived in Jamestown," said presenter Tavis Smiley. "By telling the stories of the events of the past, we can help the leaders of the future set the stage for active participation in the democratic process for years to come."

Exhibition organizers worked with some of the most notable scholars in the field to develop **America I AM**, one of the broadest on this subject ever mounted. Among others, advisory panel members include Lawrence J. Pijeaux Jr., president and CEO of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and immediate past president of the Association of African American Museums; Cornel West, professor of religion and African American studies at Princeton University; and Henry Louis Gates Jr., the director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and American Research at Harvard University. John Fleming, president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, serves as executive producer.

“We are pleased to host this exhibition, together with *RACE: Are We So Different?* and related programming with the California African American Museum,” notes Jeffrey Rudolph, president of the California Science Center. “The two exhibitions are complementary; *America I Am* highlights the contributions of African Americans and opens a dialogue about our collective experience and the *RACE* exhibit encourages guests to explore the science and everyday impact of race and racism.”

Through 12 galleries, **America I AM** conveys a journey from struggle to triumph to celebration. Visitors will walk past the “Door of No Return” and view personal artifacts and innovations from African American artists, activists and inventors. An interactive area allows visitors to leave their own video “imprints,” a collection that will grow throughout the tour with the potential to become the largest recorded oral history project in U.S. history. Among the poignant pieces in the exhibition are:

- “The Door 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*
- Items from contemporary icons including Ray Charles, Michael Jackson, Etta James, Jimi Hendrix, Michael Jordan, Tupac, and others
- Objects representing the African American troops that fought and impacted the outcome of major U.S. wars
- Malcolm X’s journal 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 training for 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 today

“From King Tut to **America I AM**, which conveys a meaningful contemporary story, our hope in bringing these world-class exhibitions to Los Angeles is that visitors will leave uplifted and informed, with a richer understanding of the culture and history of this country, and the world,” said John Norman, president of AEI.

America I AM is made possible by Walmart Stores, Inc., which serves as its presenting sponsor. The exhibition's educational partner is Northern Trust. Microsoft is the technology partner for the tour.

“All of us at Walmart are honored to play a role in presenting an exhibit that honors the contributions that African Americans have made to our great nation,” said Kimberly Sentovich, vice president and regional general manager, Walmart. “America I Am not only recognizes African American history as American history, but as something that should be remembered throughout the year. We are excited to be able to present this history to our customers, associates and partners in Los Angeles area and throughout the West Coast.”

“Northern Trust is proud to be the educational partner of this inspiring exhibition portraying the many significant contributions African Americans have made to our society,” said Frederick H. Waddell, president and chief executive officer of Northern Trust. “We are deeply committed to promoting cultural understanding and inclusion among our employees, clients and the communities we serve. In supporting America I AM, we hope to further its celebration of African American history and culture here in Los Angeles and among visitors from around the world.”

OF RELATED INTEREST

Visitors can delve deeper into topics of race, culture and civil rights by exploring other related exhibitions, programs, and films on view at the California African American Museum - *Tuskegee Airmen, Harlem of the West: Jazz, Bebop and Beatnik San Francisco's Fillmore District 40s-50s, After 1968; An Idea Called Tomorrow I* (www.caamuseum.org), California Science Center - *RACE: Are We So Different?* (www.californiasciencecenter.org), and the Skirball Cultural Center - *Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956-1968, An Idea Called Tomorrow II, Breach of Peace: Photographs of Freedom Riders by Eric Etheridge* (www.skirball.org).

AMERICA I AM TICKET INFORMATION

The **California Science Center** and **IMAX Theater** are located in historic Exposition Park just west of the Harbor (110) Freeway at 700 Exposition Park Drive. The Science Center is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 pm.

Tickets for **America I AM: *The African American Imprint*** are currently on sale. Guests are encouraged to purchase tickets by phone at 213-744-2019 or at www.californiasciencecenter.org beginning Friday. **America I AM** admission prices are \$9.50 for adults (18-59); \$8.50 for students/youth (13-17), college students with I.D. and seniors (60+); and \$6 for children (4-12). Member rates, including Science Center, California African American Museum and Skirball Center members, are \$8.50 for adults (18-59); \$7 for students/youth (13-17), college students with I.D. and seniors (60+); and \$5 for children (4-12). School groups are admitted *free*; special rates apply for other groups of 15 or more. The exhibition's group information number is 213-744-2019. Audio guides are also available at \$5 for adults and children, \$4 for member adults and children. Admission to all other Science Center exhibits is free.

More information about the exhibition and tickets is available at www.californiasciencecenter.org or www.AmericaIAM.org.

About the California Science Center

The California Science Center's mission is as follows: "We aspire to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning in everyone by creating fun, memorable experiences, because we value science as an indispensable tool for understanding our world, accessibility and inclusiveness, and enriching people's lives."

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 sellers *Covenant with Black America*, *What I Know for Sure: My Story of Growing up in America*, and *THE COVENANT In Action*. For more information, visit 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 the live-entertainment division of Los Angeles-based AEG, one of the leading sports and entertainment presenters in the world. For more information, visit www.artsandexhibitions.com.

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.

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. 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, www.walmartstores.com, or www.walmartfoundation.org.

ABOUT Northern Trust

Northern Trust Corporation (Nasdaq: NTRS) 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 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 March 31, 2009, Northern Trust had assets under custody of US\$2.8 trillion, and assets under investment management of US\$522.3 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. To learn more about Microsoft Diversity visit: <http://www.microsoft.com/diversity>.

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