

TAVIS SMILEY PRESENTS



The African American Imprint

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**AMERICA I AM: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN IMPRINT EXHIBITION
OPENS TOMORROW AT CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER
*Exclusive Artifacts for LA to Include Original Declaration of Independence***

LOS ANGELES, CA (October 29, 2009) – Doors will open tomorrow for 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. Exclusively for the Los Angeles showing, one of four original copies of the Declaration of Independence will be on display until January 15, 2010, and other new additions to the Los Angeles presentation include items from Magic Johnson, Serena Williams, Carl Lewis, NASA astronauts, and more.

California Science Center will host the exhibition from October 30, 2009 to April 15, 2010, as 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 is a 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 150 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.

"From the arrival of the first Africans in Jamestown, to the election of President Barack Obama, **America I AM** explores and celebrates the trials and triumphs that illustrate the unique journey of African Americans," said broadcaster Tavis Smiley, who is presenting the exhibition. "This exhibition serves as a powerful reminder of the diverse contributions that African Americans have made to the American mosaic while underscoring that each of us as human beings can leave an imprint, and I'm especially proud to bring its important message to my fellow Los Angeles residents."

“We are pleased to host this exhibition, together with *RACE: Are We So Different?* and related programming with the California African American Museum,” said Jeffrey Rudolph, president of the California Science Center. “Together, the two exhibitions offer an unprecedented opportunity for Angelenos of every walk of life to revisit the history of our country through a different lens and have a dialogue about our collective experience and the everyday impact of race in our city.”

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** is made possible by Walmart, which serves as its presenting sponsor.

“The King Tut exhibition in 2005 broke records, and now we are proud to present **America I AM**, which has the opportunity to break barriers,” said John Norman, president of AEI.

Through 12 galleries, **America I AM** conveys a journey from struggle to triumph to celebration through 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”
- Items from contemporary icons including Ray Charles, Michael Jackson, Etta James, Jimi Hendrix, Magic Johnson, Serena Williams, 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
- A model of the first traffic signal that served as the basis for today’s traffic lights
- 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 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

Exhibition organizers worked with some of the most notable scholars in the field to develop **America I AM** as one of the broadest exhibitions 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.

“The year 2008 marked a turning point in American History and signaled a new maturity in our political process. **America I AM** provides an opportunity for the nation to embark on a unique cultural and historical discussion of what it means to be an American in the twenty-first century,” said John Fleming, president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, and executive producer of the exhibition.

As part of its commitment, Walmart is offering discounted exhibition tickets (Adults \$8, Kids ages 4-12 \$4.50) at 30 locations throughout Southern California.

“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.”

Support from the exhibition’s educational partner Northern Trust is making it possible to avail 10,000 free tickets to Los Angeles youth during the first month of the exhibition. These vouchers can be downloaded at www.AmericaIAM.org (not valid for groups).

“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.”

Microsoft is the technology partner for the tour.

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).

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **America I AM: The African American Imprint** are available at the Science Center box office, by phone at 323-SCIENCE or 213-744-2019 or at www.californiasciencecenter.org. There are no same-day phone sales. **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). Admission for school groups is free; special rates apply for other groups of 15 or more. 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.

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 and **America I AM** are open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. 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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