

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact:**

Tony Cook, Marketing & Public Relations  
(816) 460-2214  
tcook@unionstation.org

**Union Station Kansas City Will Host**  
**AMERICA I AM: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN IMPRINT Exhibition**  
**Opens October 22, Tickets on Sale Now**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo., August 19, 2011** – Union Station Kansas City will be home to **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 exhibition will be in the Bank of America Grand Gallery at Union Station Kansas City from October 22, 2011 to January 8, 2012.

**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.unionstation.org](http://www.unionstation.org).

**America I AM: The African American Imprint** is developed in partnership with Tavis Smiley, and is organized by Cincinnati Museum Center and Arts & Exhibitions International (AEI), a division of AEG Live. AEI also organized the *Diana, A Celebration* exhibition that drew over 100,000 visitors to Kansas City earlier this year.

**“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.”

“We are proud that Kansas City was chosen and that Union Station has been selected to host this important exhibition,” said George Guastello, president and CEO of Union Station Kansas City.

"The contributions of the African American in our nation's history and railroad history are honored by this exhibition," said Michael Haverty, chairman of the board of Union Station Kansas City. "Many of the individuals presented in this exhibition actually used our historic facility. We are honored to have these stories and this history presented at Union Station Kansas City."

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

**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. The exhibition is welcomed locally by Kansas City Power & Light, KPRS-AM/FM and KCPT-Kansas City Public Television.

"Walmart is honored to sponsor the *America I AM* exhibition, which allows families of all backgrounds to celebrate the rich contributions of African-Americans in the United States," said Brannon Dixon, Regional General Manager for the Kansas City area, Walmart U.S. "By providing reduced-price tickets to this one-of-a-kind experience, Walmart remains committed to giving our customers the best value so they can save money and live better."

"Northern Trust is proud to be the educational partner of this inspiring exhibition portraying some of the many significant contributions African Americans have made to our society," said Northern Trust chairman and chief executive officer Frederick H. Waddell. "We are deeply committed to promoting

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cultural understanding and inclusion among our employees, clients and the communities we serve. We hope many people in Kansas City area and around the world will experience **America I AM** and its celebration of African American history and culture.”

## **AMERICA I AM TICKET INFORMATION**

**Union Station Kansas City** is located at 30 West Pershing in downtown Kansas City. The exhibition will be open Tuesday – Sunday. Tickets for **America I AM: *The African American Imprint*** are currently on sale. Guests are encouraged to purchase tickets at [www.unionstation.org](http://www.unionstation.org). **America I AM** admission prices are \$12 for adults (18-59); \$10 for students/military/seniors; \$8 for children (3-12). Member rates are \$5. School groups for grade K-12 are \$5; \$8 for adult groups of 15 or more. The exhibition’s group information number is 816-460-2094. Audio guides are also available at \$3 for adults and children. More information about the exhibition and tickets is available at [www.unionstation.org](http://www.unionstation.org) or [www.AmericaIAM.org](http://www.AmericaIAM.org).

### **About Union Station Kansas City, Inc.**

Union Station Kansas City is a historical landmark and civic asset renovated and reopened to the public in 1999. The organization, driven by its mission of science and history education and entertainment, features a science center, the popular Model Railroad Experience open year round, new planetarium, one of the region’s largest screen movie theaters, live theater, shops, restaurants and home to prominent area civic organizations and businesses. Visit [unionstation.org](http://unionstation.org) for details.

### **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](http://www.tavistalks.com).

### **ABOUT Arts & Exhibitions International (AEI)**

AEI is a division of AEG LIVE and 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, “Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the Whydah from Slave Ship to Pirate Ship” and “Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt.” Norman and Numhauser have 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.” For more information, visit [www.artsandexhibitions.com](http://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](http://www.cincymuseum.org).

**About Walmart**

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT) serves customers and members more than 200 million times per week at over 9,600 retail units under 69 different banners in 28 countries. With fiscal year 2011 sales of \$419 billion, Walmart employs 2.1 million associates worldwide. Walmart continues to be a leader in sustainability, corporate philanthropy and employment opportunity. Additional information about Walmart can be found by visiting <http://walmartstores.com> and on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/walmart>. Online merchandise sales are available at <http://www.walmart.com> and <http://www.samsclub.com>.

**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. 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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