PHILLY HONORS THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN’S VOTING RIGHTS IN 2020
19th Amendment Centennial Brings Major Art & Cultural Exhibits; Spotlights Historic Sites & Leaders

PHILADELPHIA, December 5, 2019 – Philadelphia is famous for the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, but America’s birthplace also played a leading role in the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment, which granted the first group of American women the right to vote. For centuries, Philadelphia was an incubator of suffrage thought, home to many suffrage leaders — and a testing ground for some of the most famous demonstrations.

In 2020, Philadelphia honors the centennial of women’s voting rights — and the future of the women’s rights movement — with special exhibitions and events. These include Women 100, a citywide program featuring live and fine arts, a road rally and a massive public toast to the suffragettes. There will be history-centric exhibitions at the Brandywine River Museum of Art, National Constitution Center and Museum of the American Revolution, and art-centric ones at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Philadelphia Museum of Art. What’s more, summer 2020 will see the grand opening of Philadelphia’s Guild House Hotel, a boutique operation in a National Historic Landmark building that belonged to — and will honor — a 19th-century working women’s advocacy and support group.

Exploring The History Of Women’s Suffrage: Exhibitions & Events:

- Women 100 – Vision2020 is Drexel University’s national women’s equality initiative, organizing several citywide events to honor the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. women100.org. These include:
  - Seat at the Table – A free, seven-day-a-week, interactive art exhibition by Dome Collective invites the public to experience women’s representation in places of power — seats at tables — through 3D infographic furniture, while a wall of interactive screens introduces gender barrier-breakers throughout women’s history. March 1 – September 30, 2020. Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, 300 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999, domecollective.com
SHE Leads Road Rally – Racecar drivers pull an all-night, round-trip road trip from East Falls (Drexel University College of Medicine) in Philadelphia to Seneca Falls, New York, site of the first Women’s Rights Convention. (Buses also available.)

June 19 – 20, 2020. 2900 W. Queen Lane, Philadelphia, women100.org

Toast to Tenacity™ – Independence Mall honors the 100th anniversary of voting rights for women — Women’s Equality Day — with midday speakers, live music and glasses raised to suffragists. Independence National Historical Park is co-hosting this event.

August 26, 2020. 599 Market Street, phlvisitorcenter.com

Celebrating Women – At the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, this 2,500-person celebration of American women begins with a ceremony featuring music, performance segments and a salute to 100 women who have blazed trails for others to follow in a multitude of fields. September 16, 2020. 300 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999, women100.org, kimmelcenter.org

Votes for Women: A Visual History – The Brandywine River Museum of Art displays and explains century-old political cartoons, plays, posters, parades and fashion that formed the visual culture of the U.S. women’s suffrage movement. Drawings, illustrations, photographs of marches and rallies, clothing and accessories — especially sashes — re-create and contextualize this time of tangible art and physical action, long before social media or television. Activating the exhibition are curator talks and live performances. February 1 – June 7, 2020. 1 Hoffman’s Mill Road, Chadds Ford, (610) 388-2700, brandywine.org

Betsy Ross House – The wee Old City home of the legendary flagmaker hosts women’s history makers from the past century on Suffragette Saturdays during Women’s History Month (March 7, 14, 21, 28, 2020). On Thursdays — Rebel Thursdays — in June through August, Ross will be joined by a 19th-century suffragette who will be stitching stars on the ratification flag.

239 Arch Street, (215) 686-1252, historicphiladelphia.org

Once Upon a Nation – Spring through summer, storytellers and History Makers wearing 18th- and 19th-century period dress fill the Historic District, offering live perspectives on the early days of the United States. This summer, actors will portray activists Lucretia Coffin Mott, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Alice Paul, while the story for women’s struggle for suffrage will be told at a designated storytelling bench. Three times per day, all four individuals (the History Makers and the storyteller) will gather behind Independence Hall to read the Declaration of Sentiments, Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s 1848 rewriting of the Declaration of Independence, to include equality for women. Free. May 23 – September 7, 2020. historicphiladelphia.org

19th Amendment – The National Constitution Center expands on its permanent exhibit, Civil War and Reconstruction: The Battle for Freedom and Equality, with an exhibit about the movement for women’s voting rights. The new addition explores constitutional arguments for and against women’s rights and offers fascinating historical context, spotlighting multiple generations of advocates and exploring the complex debates surrounding voting rights for African Americans versus rights for white women, including a one-actor theatrical performance based on the words of anti-slavery and pro-suffrage activist Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. Notable artifacts include Lucretia Mott’s diary, a rare printing of the Declaration of Sentiments and a 19th-century ballot box used to collect women’s votes. Opens June 10, 2020. 525 Arch Street, (215) 409-6700, constitutioncenter.org

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When Women Lost the Vote: A Revolutionary Story, 1776-1807 – The Museum of the American Revolution’s special exhibition features the stories of New Jersey women who legally voted in elections shortly after the Declaration of Independence was released. Though the loophole in the law was eventually closed, the impact of their votes and their fight to maintain their suffrage echoed through generations. August 22, 2020 – March 28, 2021. 101 S. 3rd Street, (215) 253-6731, amrevmuseum.org

Empowering Women: Exhibitions & Events:
• Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg – The National Museum of American Jewish History hosts the first East Coast stop for an exhibition about the second woman and first Jewish woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. Sharing its name with the New York Times bestselling book, the visual memoir traces Justice Ginsburg’s transformation from a camp rabbi, law student, women’s rights advocate into all-around icon. It also features her Supreme Court robe and signature jabot. Through January 12, 2020. 101 S. Independence Mall East, (215) 923-3811, nmajh.org
• Taking Space: Contemporary Women Artists and The Politics of Scale – The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) presents impressive, political, space-claiming large-scale artwork from its own collection by women artists. Massive painting, drawings, sculpture, installation and mixed media, including major pieces by Betye Saar and Njideka Akunyili Crosby, examine the historic, present and future roles of women in art — and the world. July 16 – December 6, 2020. 128 N. Broad Street, (215) 972-7600, pafa.org
• Fresh & Fierce: Women Artists Networks (1891-1929) – PAFA shines a light on the work of William Merritt Chase, an artist and instructor who, at a time when women were largely left out, taught and created a community out of more than 500 women artists at PAFA. The exhibition will show Chase’s work alongside works by some of his students: Georgia O’Keeffe, Alice Kent Stoddard, Laura Wheeler Waring and others. October 31, 2020 – March 28, 2021. 118 N. Broad Street (215) 972-7600, pafa.org

Sites Where Women Made History:
• Arch Street Meeting House – Human rights activists and social reformers Lucretia Mott and sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimke were members of this 18th-century Quaker meeting house in Old City, a site also essential to the 18th-century Pennsylvania Abolition Society and the 20th-century LGBTQ rights group, the Philadelphia Conference. Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, visitors can learn more about the role of the meeting house at Historic Philadelphia Inc.’s free Once Upon a Nation storytelling bench stationed outside. 320 Arch Street, (215) 413-1804, historicasmh.org
• Chester County Historical Society (CCHS) – A small collection of women’s suffrage materials is housed in their library documenting pieces of local chapters of the Pennsylvania Women’s Rights Association. CCHS’s Horticultural Hall was the site of the Pennsylvania Women’s Rights Convention in 1852, called to order by Lucretia Mott. 225 N. High Street, West Chester, (610) 692-4800, chestercohistorical.org
• Historical Society of Pennsylvania – Among the 21 million printed and graphic items in this vast library are two remarkable archival suffrage collections: the Papers of Caroline Katzenstein and Dora Kelly Lewis, both of whom played important roles in the local and national suffrage movement. One notable letter in the Lewis Collection is a letter written from Occoquan Prison, where she was jailed and force-fed after picketing at the White House. 1300 Locust Street, (215) 732-6200, hsp.org
**Independence National Historical Park (INHP)** – Independence Mall has long been a site for protest and celebration. It’s where Susan B. Anthony boldly orated the *Declaration of Rights of the Women of the United States* in 1876, and the Justice Bell rang jubilantly for the signing of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Beginning this spring, INHP will commemorate the centennial of women’s suffrage with three special exhibits: women’s rights in the 18th century (at the Benjamin Franklin Museum), the suffrage story in the 19th and early 20th centuries (at the Liberty Bell Center) and suffrage events on Independence Square (in the East Wing of Independence Hall). In August, the Justice Bell will make a special appearance culminating in a late September re-enactment of the famous release of the clapper in celebration of the 19th Amendment. 143 S. 3rd Street, (215) 965-2305, nps.gov/inde

**Valley Forge National Historical Park** – The Washington Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge is home to the Justice Bell, commissioned in 1915 and silenced until women won the right to vote in 1920. It rang for the first time outside Independence Hall in September 1920 and was deeded to the Washington Memorial Chapel by its commissioner, Katherine Wentworth Ruschenberger, in 1943. The bell will ring again when it returns to Independence Mall in August (see above). 1400 N. Outer Line Drive, King of Prussia, (610) 783-1000, nps.gov/vafo

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*Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.*