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Georgia Southern University's Henderson Library Set to Open Ben Franklin Exhibit

MARCH 2, 2009



The Zach S. Henderson Library at Georgia Southern University has been selected to host a nationally-renowned traveling exhibition that celebrates the fascinating life of one of America's Founding Fathers.

'Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World' will be on display at the Henderson Library for six weeks beginning with an opening reception at 7 p.m. on March 14. The public is invited to join special guests, including Franklin family descendant Clare Ellis, on the first floor of the Zach S. Henderson Library for this event. The exhibition is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

'We are pleased and honored that this tribute to Benjamin Franklin is coming to our campus,' said W. Bede Mitchell, the dean of the Henderson Library. 'It is an educational and entertaining exhibition that will appeal to both children and adults, and we hope that people throughout the region will take advantage of this opportunity to learn about a true American icon.'

'Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World' is based on the major exhibition of the same name that was on display at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia through April 2006. The original exhibition coincided with the 300th anniversary of Franklin's birth.

The opening lecture will be presented by Johnathan O'Neill, a Constitutional historian in Georgia Southern's Department of History. He will discuss Franklin's efforts to win France's support during the American Revolution and his work during the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Henderson Library is sponsoring a series of programs that are free and open to the public. In addition, school children from throughout the area have been invited to visit the library and tour the exhibition.

Academic and public libraries from across the country that were interested in hosting the traveling exhibition were required to submit proposals to the American Library Association (ALA) Public Affairs Program, which made the final selections. Information Services Librarian JoEllen Broome made the proposal to the ALA on behalf of the Henderson Library.

Covering 1,000 square feet, the traveling exhibition features six sections of colorful, freestanding photo panels that incorporate representations of artifacts from the original exhibition.

The content is arranged in thematic sections that focus on Franklin as a youngster in Boston, his family and personal life, and the years in which he built his business as Philadelphia's premier printer. The exhibition also looks at Franklin's commitment to public service, his interest in medicine and public health, and his work in science and philosophy.

“We are delighted to have a brand-new, spacious, light-filled, cutting-edge facility now in which to showcase this milestone event the first of many more to come,” said Broome.

For more information on the exhibit, related upcoming events or Henderson Library, please visit: <http://library.georgiasouthern.edu/>.