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Pell Humanities Initiative to mark 50th Anniversary of National Endowment for the Humanities:

Initiative highlights Rhode Island's dynamic humanities community

Newport, RI—Fifty years ago, as President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed into law a bill to create the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, Rhode Island's freshman Senator, Claiborne Pell, stood directly behind the president in the White House rose garden. Pell, who had been elected in 1960, earned the honored position by helping to lead the legislative effort. It would remain one of Senator Pell's signature legislative achievements.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Humanities, three Rhode Island institutions which carry the legacy of Senator Pell—the Pell Center at Salve Regina University, the University of Rhode Island University Libraries, and the RI Council for the Humanities—have joined forces to create the Pell Humanities Initiative. The initiative will honor Senator Pell's commitment to the humanities in the health of the nation by showcasing the vital contributions of the humanities in our society today. A list of participating organizations and projects follows below.

The Pell Humanities Initiative was announced Wednesday, August 12, 2015, at a celebration of the humanities featuring current-NEH Chairman Dr. William Adams at Ochre Court on the campus of Salve Regina University. Salve's on-campus think-tank, the Pell Center, partnered with the University of Rhode Island's University Libraries—which house the Pell papers—and the RI Council for the Humanities in organizing the celebration.

“The Pell Humanities Initiative is Rhode Island's way of saying Happy Birthday to the NEH and of showcasing the tremendous contributions of the humanities in our lives today,” said Elizabeth Francis, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. “Senator Pell's vision of what makes a ‘truly great society’ is being carried out in imaginative, compelling programs all over the state, and we are highlighting how the humanities address the challenges we face and make a difference in our communities. It is exciting that so many of Rhode Island's colleges and universities, theaters, libraries, museums, historical societies, and more are participating. And we will feature many more humanities projects for the public throughout this anniversary year.”

“It is an honor to be in Rhode Island to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the legacy of Senator Claiborne Pell, who had the foresight to recognize the need for public investment in the humanities,” said NEH Chairman William Adams. “As Senator Pell knew, the humanities contribute richness, beauty, and wisdom to our lives. These three Rhode Island institutions exemplify the power of the humanities to foster community and help us address the challenges we face as a society.”

Participating Organizations & Projects:

- 2nd Story Theatre, *Discussion Sundays*, September 2015 – May 2016
- Cogut Center for the Humanities, Brown University, *Humanities in the World*, October – December 2015
- Everett: Company, Stage & School, *Youth-led Freedom Cafes*, Fall 2015 - Spring 2016
- Governor Henry Lippitt House Museum in collaboration with Generation Citizen and the Providence League of Women Voters, *Community Discussion Series*, November 2015 and Spring 2016
- John Hay Library, Brown University, *Prison Poets: Poetry from the age of mass incarceration*, September 2015 – January 2016
- John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities & Cultural Heritage, Brown University, *The New Tour: Innovations in Place-based Storytelling*, September 2015
- Johnson & Wales University John Hazen White College of Arts & Sciences, *Cultural Life Speakers Series: Dr. Temple Grandin*, March 2016
- Pell Center for Public Policy & International Relations at Salve Regina University, *Story in the Public Square*, September 2015 – August 2016
- Newport Historical Society, *Revolution House: Reinterpreting the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House and the American Revolution*, August 2015 – August 2016
- Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism, *Senator Claiborne Pell Lecture on Arts & Humanities*, October 2015
- Providence Preservation Society, *2015 Providence Symposium*, November 2015
- Providence Public Library in collaboration with Robb Dimmick and Ray Rickman, *Stages of Freedom: Black Performing Arts in Rhode Island*, October – December 2015
- Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, *Rhode Tour: Sen. Claiborne Pell and the Humanities at the Grass Roots*, August 2016
- Rhode Island Historical Society, *Ranger Talks at the Museum of Work & Culture in Woonsocket, RI*, January - March 2016
- Rhode Island School of Design, *75th Anniversary of the Division of Liberal Arts*, October 2015 – April 2016
- RISD Museum, *Double Take and Making Art History Events*, September – November 2015
- The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre, *“The Rant” by Andrew Case – a series of Public Forums*, November – December 2015
- University of Rhode Island Center for the Humanities, *The URI Pell Archive Initiative*, August 2015 – August 2016
- Wheaton College Institute for the Interdisciplinary Humanities, *Gender and Social Justice: Innovation and Community Action: Three Events*, September 2015, October 2015, March 2016

Events will be added to the Pell Humanities Initiative throughout the year. To learn more and follow upcoming events, visit rihumanities.org.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2015 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: www.neh.gov

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