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Philadelphia History Organizations Take the Lion's Share of National Endowment for the Humanities Funding

The Library Company of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Area Center for the History of Science (PACHS) Each Receive \$500,000 NEH Challenge Grant

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—January 30, 2014—When the National Endowment for the Humanities announced \$14.6 million in awards and offers for 202 humanities projects around the country last month, Philadelphia took top honors with a total of \$1,085,000 in awards through three grant programs. Most of the credit goes to the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Area Center for the History of Science, awarded a pair of \$500,000 Challenge Grants—accounting for \$1 million out of a total of \$6.1 million awarded in coveted Challenge Grants to 15 institutions. Each award will be matched with \$1.5 million in non-federal funds.

The Library Company grant and match funds will endow the Program in African American History (PAAH) and provide bridge funding to support the costs of fellowships, conferences, public programs, exhibitions, publications, and acquisitions while the endowment is being raised. PAAH, created in 2007 with the support of the Albert M. Greenfield Foundation, is the only such program in the nation dedicated to promoting the study and understanding of African American history, culture, and thought in pre-20th century America and the Atlantic World. Says Program Director and University of Delaware Associate Professor Erica Armstrong Dunbar, “This funding will enable the Library Company to realize the legacy of founder Benjamin Franklin and achieve its full potential as an independent humanities institution—contributing to the creation of new knowledge and helping to break down social barriers to participation in this process.”

The PACHS award will establish an endowment to support research, dissertation writing, and postdoctoral fellowships in the history of science, technology, and medicine. The endowment will provide a secure funding base for the fellowships and provide a strong foundation as the Center expands its consortium in the next several years by adding new member institutions from across the country. Executive Director Babak Ashrafi says, “The Challenge Grant from NEH is an exciting opportunity for our consortium, and a welcome validation of what the Center has accomplished in seven short years. Meeting this Challenge Grant will significantly advance our efforts to provide a much-needed humanistic perspective on science, technology and medicine. We are grateful to the NEH and we look forward to working with our partners, and establishing new partnerships, to meet this Challenge.”

Library Company and Program in African American History

The Library Company of Philadelphia is an independent research library specializing in American history and culture from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin, the Library Company is America's oldest cultural institution and served as the Library of Congress from the Revolutionary War to 1800. The Library Company was the largest public library in America until the Civil War and includes the extensive personal libraries of such prominent early American bibliophiles such as James Logan. Open to the public free of charge, the Library Company houses an extensive collection of rare books, manuscripts, broadsides, ephemera, prints, photographs, and works of art, and one of the national's largest holdings of early American imprints.

The Library Company houses the nation's most important collection of African American literature and history before 1900. Comprising more than 13,000 titles and 1,200 images from the mid-16th to the late-19th centuries, the African Americana holdings include books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, broadsides, and graphics documenting the Western discovery and exploitation of Africa; the rise of both slavery and antislavery movements in the new world; the development of racial thought and racism; descriptions of African American life, slave and free, throughout the Americas; slavery and race in fiction and drama; and the printed works of African American individuals and organizations.

With incomparable collections, a stellar reputation in the world of research libraries, a distinguished network of fellowship alumni and advisors, and institutional relationships with a diverse range of educational and cultural institutions, the Library Company is uniquely placed to advance understanding of the lives of people of African descent living in the Americas from the 17th through the 19th centuries and to open the process to a substantially more diverse and inclusive group of participants.

Philadelphia Area Center for the History of Science

The Philadelphia Area Center for History of Science is a consortium of twelve cultural and educational institutions using their exceptional resources to promote academic and public understanding of the history of science, technology and medicine. The Center started in 2007 as a project of the American Philosophical Society and became an independent 501(c)(3) in 2008. The consortium has an ambitious strategic plan to build an institution that would rank as a top international center for history of science alongside the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin and the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge University.

The Center works with its partners to facilitate research by scholars from across the country in the consortium's collections; share the results of historical research with broad audiences inside and outside academia; and provide a rich set of online resources for research and learning. The Center's current consortium partners include some of the oldest and most distinguished scientific institutions in the New World, as well as four of the world's leading departments of the history of science: the Department of the History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania; the Program in the History of Science in the Department of History at Princeton University; the Institute for the History of Medicine as well as the Department of the History of Science and Technology at Johns Hopkins University. The scope of our members' collections, taken together, comprise an exceptional, perhaps unique, resource for studying the history of science, technology and medicine.

Contact:

Alison McMenamin

Publicity, Events, and Program Coordinator

amcmnamin@librarycompany.org

(215)546-3181

LCP: <http://www.librarycompany.org/>

PAAH: <http://www.librarycompany.org/paah/>

PACHS: <http://www.pachs.net/>

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