



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23, 2023

“VISIONS OF AMERICA” Coming to Museums and Libraries This Summer in Celebration of the U.S. Semiquincentennial (America250)

Washington, DC—Approaching and celebrating the semiquincentennial anniversary of America's independence, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and PBS Books are joining together to produce **“Visions of America: All Stories, All People, All Places,”** a digital-first series of videos and virtual conversations that explores our post-pandemic nation with a renewed interest in the places, people, and stories that have contributed to the America we live in today.

“We must encourage shared knowledge, literacy, including historical literacy, always remembering the foundation of all literacy is reading. IMLS will continue to seek and present our local stories through museums, libraries, and their local communities, showing the truly rich diversity of the American story, told in the individual voices masking up the harmonic chorus of our community life,” said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. “Civil discourse is greatly needed today, and our most trusted civic and cultural institutions must play the central role its restoration. We hope to inspire viewers and patrons to awaken to the power and joy of their local history and the part it plays in our national story and the shared ideals of our country.”

“Visions of America” will kick off in June with three virtual conversations hosted by PBS Books with Kemper and his invited guests. Topics for discussion include:

1. June: The significance of the America250 project and the important role of IMLS as it supports museums and libraries to explore the America250 themes in their communities.
2. July: The durability of the U.S. Constitution and how the America250’s “We the People” theme can initiate conversations about the Constitution’s relevance in a changing world.
3. August: Drawing on the America250 theme “Unfinished Revolutions,” the conversation will mark the 75th anniversary of the desegregation of the military and its impact on civil rights and the definition of citizenship.

Beginning in fall 2023, Kemper will lead a video tour through three lesser-known historical sites that symbolize an aspect of the spirit of our independence. Some of our nation’s most notable historians and authors will share the tales and themes that reverberate inside the walls of these institutions. Each episode will include exploring the cities these institutions call home to probe what makes each of these communities so important to our national identity.

At the core of the project will be community outreach through museums and libraries to engage diverse audiences and foster civic discourse. PBS Books will provide free resources and offer webinars to support museum and library staff designing programs, including integrating the video content to host screening events and community conversations around the series themes.

In collaboration with IMLS and PBS Books, Detroit Public Television will serve as a media partner and producer of the new series. “PBS Books is delighted to share these important conversations not only with museums, libraries, historical sites, and their patrons – but with audiences across the country,” said Rich Homberg, president, and CEO of Detroit Public Television. “We’re proud to be a part of the America250 period of reflection and celebration and count this project as one of many we can pursue together.”

The conversations will be distributed through social media platforms including Facebook and YouTube and posted for on-demand use by museums, libraries, and the IMLS for further engagement and dissemination.

Examples of the places, people and stories that could be covered during the tour include:

- **The Freedom Tower (or Torre de la Libertad)** in Miami has graced the city’s skyline for nearly a century, but it wasn’t until it played a crucial role in hosting Cuban refugees who fled their home country in the wake of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 that it became an important national landmark.
- **The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum** was founded in 1990 to keep the stories of its players and how they eventually broke the barriers of segregation in Major League Baseball alive, especially Jackie Robinson, who played for the Kansas City Monarchs before his courageous move to the MLB. While the conversation will start with baseball, the museum also shares its building with the American Jazz Museum and is located in the famed 18th & Vine District.
- **The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience** was established in Seattle in 1967 as the only Pan-Asian Pacific American community-based museum in the country. The episode will feature a discussion of the resilience of Asian American immigrants, through their early oppression in the United States to a now flourishing community in Seattle’s Chinatown-International District.

In addition to the programs themselves, DPTV and PBS Books plans to distribute “Visions of America” series to interested PBS stations as well as through the PBS app. Classroom resources will be developed to be used by teachers across the country.

Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums,

libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. IMLS envisions a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

PBS Books

Started in 2014 by Detroit Public Television, PBS Books is a trusted national brand and a multiplatform initiative connecting diverse audiences to books through PBS stations and programming, daily and original content, book fairs, conferences, live performances, screenings and other book-related events. The vision of PBS Books is to foster a community of people engaged in unique literary experiences that spark their curiosity, promote dialogue and inspire learning. PBS Books aims to provide context for complex issues – both national and local. In early 2019 with the support of the Knight Foundation and the Wyncote Foundation, PBS Books launched a free Library Engagement Program, which currently has more than 1,800 library partners. Today, PBS Books produces regular virtual content promoting critical dialogue about current topics and critical issues in communities across the U.S. To learn more, please visit: www.pbsbooks.org.

About Detroit Public TV

Serving Southeast Michigan, Detroit Public TV (DPTV) is Michigan's largest and most watched television station, with the most diverse public television audience in the country. Each week, more than 2 million people watch DPTV's five broadcast channels, and nearly 200,000 people listen to its radio station, 90.9 WRCJ, for classical days and jazzy nights. In addition, DPTV is building the next generation of public media with a rapidly growing digital presence, which now reaches more than half a million unique visitors through its website, YouTube channels and social media platforms each month. For more information, visit dptv.org.

#