



525 Arch Street | Independence Mall
 Philadelphia | PA 19106 | T 215 409 6600 | F 215 409 6650
www.constitutioncenter.org

National Constitution Center Displays WWI Posters To Mark Philadelphia Sketch Club's 150th Anniversary



Howard Chandler Christy



H. Devitt Welsh

Philadelphia, PA (January 14, 2010) – To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Philadelphia Sketch Club, the National Constitution Center will host *Inspiring a Nation*, an exhibition featuring World War I posters created by Philadelphia Sketch Club artists. Curated by the U.S. Army Heritage & Education Center, the posters will be on exhibition in the Center's Posterity Hall from February 4 through April 25, 2010. Admission to *Inspiring a Nation* is FREE with museum admission.

Working for the Division of Pictorial Publicity, created by President Woodrow Wilson as part of the controversial Committee on Public Information, Philadelphia Sketch Club artists were part of a national effort to motivate citizens to support the war effort. Over three hundred of America's foremost cartoonists, designers, illustrators, and painters signed up to work for the division, contributing to the government's efforts to shape and mobilize public opinion.

From April 1917 through the war's end in November 1918, over seven hundred poster designs were submitted to government agencies, including the U.S. Food Administration, the Liberty Loan Program, and the Red Cross. At the time – well before the advent of television – posters were powerful tools

of mass communication and persuasion, and the collective work of these artists constituted a massive and effective advertising campaign. In fact, following the war, Congress found that two-thirds of the cost of the war was raised by poster bond drives.

"These posters are among World War I's most lasting images," said National Constitution Center President and CEO David Eisner. "Some of the nation's leading artists, including members of the Philadelphia Sketch Club, donated their time and work to create them. In that spirit of patriotic service, the Center is pleased to participate in the citywide celebration of the Sketch Club's 150th anniversary."

The Philadelphia Sketch Club began operations in 1860, founded by six former students of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts who wanted to improve their skills as illustrators. Over the years, Sketch Club members have been influential in the development of American Art, both regionally and nationally. Members have included luminaries such as Thomas Eakins, Thomas Anshutz, Joseph Pennell, Howard Chandler Christy, N.C. Wyeth, and dozens of members from the Golden Age of illustration. An extensive, year-long celebration of this heritage, including collaborative

exhibitions and special events, will take place throughout the greater Philadelphia area and beyond as the Sketch Club reaches its 150th anniversary in 2010. Visit www.sketchclub.org for more information.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Ashley Berke
 Director of Public Relations
 215.409.6693
aberke@constitutioncenter.org