

STUDENTS TO JOURNEY BACK IN TIME DURING COLONIAL DAY AT THE CAPITOL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OKLAHOMA CITY – Nearly 500 Oklahoma students will travel back in time and meet such historical figures as Martha Washington and Benjamin Franklin during the 17th annual Colonial Day at the Capitol, slated Friday, Feb. 8, at the Oklahoma State Capitol. The program is presented by Colonial Williamsburg and George Washington teacher institute alumni in partnership with the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence.

Students from Arnett, Edmond, Enid, Gore, Midwest City, Moore, Oklahoma City, Putnam City, Stuart and Tuttle public schools will be dressed in colonial-period attire for the hands-on history education event. Activities will take place from 9:15 a.m. to 1:35 p.m. on the second and fourth floors of the Oklahoma State Capitol building.

Oklahoma is the only state in the nation to host a Colonial Day event at its state capitol. Students will have the opportunity to interact with people from the past – portrayed by historical interpreters – and participate in such teacher-led sessions as colonial dancing, revolutionary soldier life, tin smithing and Native American history. The day will include a giant, student-led Bill of Rights song during opening ceremonies in the House of Representatives Chamber and debates between young patriots fighting for America’s independence and loyalists faithful to Britain’s king.

Highlighting this year’s Colonial Day will be special appearances by Colonial Williamsburg historical interpreter Katherine Pittman, who will portray Martha Washington; Mount Vernon historical interpreters Matt Mattingly, who portrays Tobias Lear, personal secretary to George Washington, and Tom Plott, playing Dr. James Craik, Washington’s close friend and physician. Stephen Smith, a Tulsa historical interpreter, will return for his 17th Colonial Day performance as Benjamin Franklin.

“Colonial Day is an engaging and action-packed day of learning that brings early American history to life for Oklahoma students,” said Colonial Day Director Teresa Potter, a teacher at Fisher Elementary School in MOORE. “By attending this event right in the legislative, executive and judicial chambers of our State Capitol, students also get to make connections between the founders of our Constitution and the freedoms and responsibilities we enjoy today as U.S. citizens.”

Other historical guests at Colonial Day will include Wyn Mabee, a female spy from the Revolutionary War portrayed by Janet Bass, Oklahoma Christian School, EDMOND; and Patsy Jefferson, daughter of Founding Father Thomas Jefferson, presented by actress Brooke Potter of MOORE. In addition, staff from the Oklahoma History Center will lead sessions on colonial dancing, agriculture and soldier life.

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The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence will recognize the winner of its Colonial Day Literature Contest during opening ceremonies at 9:15 a.m. in the House of Representatives Chambers. Colonial Williamsburg's Martha Washington will present a plaque and \$100 to literature contest winner Averie Blumstein of Truman Elementary School in NORMAN. The theme of the annual contest is "What It Means to Be an American."

Colonial Day is coordinated by teachers who have participated in the Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute through a fellowship program administered by the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence or who have attended the George Washington Teacher Institute at Mount Vernon. Joining Potter as coordinators of this year's Colonial Day are Jan Morris, Soldier Creek Elementary School in MIDWEST CITY; Jessica Brandon, Barnes Elementary School, MIDWEST CITY; and Jane Williams, Centennial Elementary School, EDMOND.

Schools participating in Colonial Day at the Capitol are ARNETT School; Heritage Elementary School, EDMOND; Coolidge Elementary School in ENID; GORE Elementary School; Ridgecrest Elementary School, Mid-Del Public Schools, MIDWEST CITY; Fisher Elementary School, MOORE; Truman Elementary School, NORMAN; Epic Charter School, OKLAHOMA CITY; Northridge Elementary School, Putnam City Public Schools, OKLAHOMA CITY; STUART Public School; TUTTLE Intermediate School; and VANOSS School.

Major funding for Colonial Day at the Capitol is provided by a grant from Oklahoma Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The event is also made possible with support from Champion Hotels, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens, the Kirkpatrick Foundation Inc., Mattocks Printing Co., the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma History Center, the Oklahoma Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Charles L. Oppenheim, Panera Bread and the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence.

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