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For Immediate Release

Encounters: Let's Talk About the Declaration of Independence

January 24, 2017 — What's in a name? The creation of the United States of America made us a democracy and a republic. That creation story and the players in it are very much with us. "Hamilton," is one of the biggest Broadway hits and presents founders Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr as flesh and blood men. With their flashes of brilliance and crippling personal deficits they invent a new government.

Politics has occupied public attention for the past year as we elected a new U.S. president. So a deeper dive into documents created by our founders is especially timely.

The Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, and the University of Connecticut's Humanities Institute, are launching a community engagement partnership with a new discussion series called *Encounters*. The partners will provide discussion leaders to engage in topics aimed at strengthening our ability to know ourselves and one another through respectful and challenging dialogue. This February and March, *Encounters* will focus on the fundamental documents that define our democracy.

Encounters: The Declaration of Independence

Saturday, February 4, 2017

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 600 Main Street, Hartford, CT

Reception: 3 pm, Hartford Courant Room

Discussion: 3:30 to 5 pm, John Trumbull: Visualizing American Independence, Exhibition Gallery

Our discussion will take place in the galleries of the special exhibition *John Trumbull: Visualizing American Independence*, which examines the Revolutionary War through the eyes of artists, most notably John Trumbull (1756–1843).

Trumbull, born in Lebanon, Conn., served in the Continental Army and created a series of historical paintings.

Read more about [Trumbull](#).

Read the [Declaration of Independence](#).

RSVP helpful, but not necessary, to faculty@wadsworthatheneum.org

Participants include: Brenda Miller, Chief Cultural Affairs and Public Programming Office of Hartford Public Library; Jasmin Agosto, Education and Outreach Manager of Hartford History Center; Brendan Kane, Associate Professor of History at University of Connecticut; Dana Miranda, doctoral candidate in philosophy at University of Connecticut; Matthew J. Guariglia, doctoral candidate in history at the University of Connecticut; and Prof. Christopher Clark, head of the history department University of Connecticut.

Encounters: The Bill of Rights

Saturday, March 4, 2017, Noon to 2 pm

Downtown Library, 500 Main Street, Hartford, CT

Hartford History Center, 3rd floor

Join the conversation as we discuss the *Bill of Rights*, the first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution. The *Bill of Rights* was created in response to calls from Congressional representatives (such as Connecticut's Roger Sherman) for greater constitutional protection of personal freedoms and rights of American citizens. It outlines specific prohibitions on governmental power.

The amendments include the right of free speech, protections against unreasonable search and seizure, and a speedy and public jury trial.

We invite members of the public to read the amendments and participate in a discussion at the Library's Hartford History Center. We'll explore issues that confront us every day, and how we can better understand our rights.

Lunch will be served; participants must please register in advance.

Read the [Bill of Rights](#) .

RSVP to attend the March 4 program by contacting Jasmin Agosto, jeagosto@hplct.org or 860-695-6367.

Participants include: Brenda Miller, Chief Cultural Affairs and Public Programming Office of Hartford Public Library; Jasmin Agosto, Education and Outreach Manager of Hartford History Center; Brendan Kane, Associate Professor of History at University of Connecticut; Dana Miranda, doctoral candidate in philosophy at

University of Connecticut; Matthew J. Guariglia, doctoral candidate in history at the University of Connecticut; and Prof. Christopher Clark, head of the history department University of Connecticut; and Prof. Richard D. Brown , University of Connecticut Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus.