

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE

MEDIA ALERT
May 2, 2018

Virginia Museum of History & Culture MEMORIAL DAY EVENT Featuring a Presidential Limousine, Family-Friendly Activities, and Ceremony



Richmond, VA — The Virginia Museum of History & Culture invites the public to participate in a special Memorial Day event on Monday, May 28 as part of their year-long commemoration of the centennial of WWI. The museum will host a ceremony at 1:00 p.m. to honor the 100,000 Virginians who served during WWI, and specifically the 3,700 Virginians who gave their lives. Family friendly activities include storytelling, crafts, and interactions with living historians who will illuminate the era for guests unfamiliar with The Great War.

In addition to the WWI exhibits that are on display daily, the museum has just added one extremely special artifact: Woodrow Wilson's presidential limousine. The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is excited to display this unique artifact from May 1st through Memorial Day, the longest the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum has ever loaned it to another institution.

Lizzie Oglesby, Manager of Public Relations & Marketing
loglesby@VirginiaHistory.org 804.342.9665



WHAT YOU CAN SEE

- President Woodrow Wilson's 1919 Pierce-Arrow Series 51 limousine

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 1:00 p.m. Ceremony honoring Virginians who made the ultimate sacrifice during WWI and featuring musical performances by the 392nd Army Band's Brass quintet.
- Interact with living historians representing soldiers who fought in the war, and character interpreters portraying President Woodrow Wilson and General John J. Pershing.
- Participate in family friendly activities that illustrate the many ways all Virginians did their part during the Great War.

EXHIBITS ON DISPLAY

- *WW1 America and The Commonwealth and the Great War* feature individual Americans and Virginians who contributed to the war efforts. Included with suggested admission to the museum.

“It was President Wilson’s ultimate decision that led the U.S. into World War I, and he was president when armistice was finally declared in 1919.” said President and CEO, Jamie O. Bosket, “When President Wilson returned to the United States, this elegant limo was waiting to carry him back to Washington, D.C. We are so thrilled to allow our guests this rare opportunity to get up close to this storied object, one of the very few of its kind that remain, for its longest stay in Richmond.”

When Woodrow Wilson returned from France after negotiating the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, a new Pierce-Arrow limousine awaited him at Washington’s Union Station. The automobile—one of the most luxurious available at the time—had just been added to the White House fleet. Wilson favored this automobile so much that when he left office his friends purchased it for him to use. The car had received its finishing touches at the plant of the manufacturer, the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company of Buffalo, New York, in June 1919. It was the 120th of the "Series 51" model.

President Wilson rode frequently on official business in the handsome limousine which was distinguished by two special emblems. On each of its arched rear passenger doors, the Presidential Seal was displayed. And on the front of the radiator panel was the symbol of the American Automobile Association (AAA). In 1917, Wilson was the first President of the United States to join the organization.

The limousine has been restored and its engine is in full working order. It was taken for a spin on the streets of Richmond before being parked inside the Virginia Museum of History & Culture on May 1. Its location in the main lobby make it accessible and free for all guests daily including during the Memorial Day commemoration event.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society — a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation. For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is located at 428 North Boulevard in Richmond’s Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. for the research library. For more information call (804) 358-4901, visit VirginiaHistory.org, or connect with the Virginia Museum of History & Culture on Facebook and Twitter.

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