



HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of* WASHINGTON, D.C.

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April 5, 2017

CONTACT: John Suau, jsuau@dchistory.org, 202.249.3953

DR. FRANK SMITH TO RECEIVE VISIONARY HISTORIAN AWARD FROM HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

*Purchase tickets to the award ceremony, part of the Historical Society's 123rd
Anniversary Celebration,
Thursday, May 11, 2017*

WASHINGTON, D.C.: The Historical Society of Washington, D.C. invites all Washingtonians to honor Dr. Frank Smith, founding director of the African American Civil War Memorial and Museum, as he receives the Historical Society's fourth Visionary Historian Award. The award is presented annually to an individual whose lifetime body of work represents the highest achievement in the study of Washington, D.C. and related history.

The award ceremony—centerpiece of the Historical Society's 123rd Anniversary—will take place on Thursday, May 11 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the historic Carnegie Library on Mount Vernon Square. It is one of the organization's annual events that recognizes local history makers; together with the Making D.C. History Awards in September, both events provide support of the nonprofit's mission to collect, interpret, and share the history of the nation's capital.

"Dr. Frank Smith has given decades of service to his adopted city as an activist, elected official and as a historian," said John Suau, executive director of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. "His concept of creating a space to honor African Americans who served in uniform during the Civil War provides the District with an important educational and cultural institution. Dr. Smith's ability to make the museum a reality establishes his role as a Visionary Historian."

In 1968, Dr. Frank Smith moved to Washington and became active in tenants' rights, housing, and other issues in his Adams Morgan neighborhood. He was elected to the D.C. Board of Education in 1979 and in 1982 he was elected to the first of four terms representing Ward 1 on the D.C. City Council.

Smith formed the African American Civil War Memorial Freedom Foundation in 1992 to tell the largely forgotten story of the 209,145 African American soldiers and sailors who had fought for the Union. He began planning, fundraising, and building public and private support for an African American Civil War Memorial and Museum, and in July 1998, Dr. Smith presided over the memorial's dedication at 10th and U Streets NW.

After leaving the City Council in January 1999, Smith opened the African American Civil War Museum in a building adjacent to the memorial. The museum, which attracts more than

200,000 visitors per year, moved in 2011 to a larger space in the former Grimke School nearby on Vermont Avenue.

The first Visionary Historian Award was presented to historian Kathryn Schneider Smith in 2014, followed by author Dr. James M. Goode in 2015, and to founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Lonnie Bunch in 2016. Tickets for the event may be purchased online [here](#).

ABOUT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., is a community-supported educational and research organization that collects, interprets, and shares the history of our nation's capital. Founded in 1894, the Historical Society serves diverse audiences through its collections, public programs, exhibitions, and publications. The Historical Society offers exhibitions and programs throughout the year encouraging the collection of local history as well as the documentation of contemporary D.C. The Historical Society galleries and research library are located in the historic Carnegie Library at Mt. Vernon Square, 801 K Street NW. To support exhibitions and related programming at the Historical Society and to learn more, please visit dchistory.org.

ABOUT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

“The African American Civil War Memorial Freedom Foundation was incorporated in 1992 to tell the largely unknown story of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). As a tribute to these soldiers, the African American Civil War Memorial was dedicated in July of 1998 under the leadership of Dr. Frank Smith Jr., and Colin Powell. The African American Civil War Museum opened its doors in January of 1999 and communicates the stories of the USCT.

The core mission of the African American Civil War Museum is to serve the educational needs of its local, national, and international community with a high-quality and effective learning experience while interpreting the history of the USCT and the community life of African Americans prior to, and after, the American Civil War. With this mission as the central aspect of its operations, the Museum constantly seeks to provide a variety of learning opportunities for students of all ages, teachers, scholars, USCT descendants, churches, and the general public through its programming.” For information visit afroamcivilwar.org.

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