



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL™ FEBRUARY PROGRAMMING PUTS THE SPOTLIGHT ON BLACK HISTORY MONTH & PRESIDENTS

Washington, DC, January 27, 2010 – Smithsonian Channel celebrates Black History Month as well as President's Day in February with programs that will shed light on remarkable Americans and events that have shaped our history. All original series and specials are presented in stunning HD and Dolby Digital 5.1 sound.

Black History Month Lineup:

### **SMITHSONIAN SPOTLIGHT: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY – Tuesday, February 2 at 10:30pm ET/PT**

The idea of establishing a museum dedicated to presenting and preserving the African American experience was first considered not long after the Civil War. It took well over a century, however, before Congress, in 2003, finally mandated the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The building isn't finished yet, but the first exhibit is already assembled – an extraordinary collection of photographs of this country's most celebrated and influential African Americans. Museum director Dr. Lonnie Bunch discusses his efforts to not only design the museum, but to fill its shelves with objects, documents and artifacts that capture and reflect the African American experience.

### **SMITHSONIAN SPOTLIGHT: SCURLOCK STUDIO – Thursday, February 4 at 7:30pm ET/PT**

Beginning in 1911, Addison Scurlock's photographs portrayed African Americans in a way that wasn't often seen. With the help of his two sons, George and Robert, the Scurlock Studio mastered the photographic portrait and captured the essence of Black Washington. Their portraits, photographs of weddings, graduations and families stand as a visual record of not only Washington, DC, but of African American culture. The Scurlocks created images to resist the racial stereotypes of their time and, in the process, produced truly fascinating art.

### **LIVES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD: NELSON MANDELA – Saturday, February 6 at 8pm ET/PT**

Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison for standing up for what he believed in. Slowly, from the remote prison on South Africa's Robben Island, he galvanized the world around his struggle to end apartheid. When Mandela was released from prison, he entered a world that had been profoundly shaped by his dream. *Lives That Changed The World: Nelson Mandela* tells the story of Nelson Mandela through the stories of nine people who were inspired by that dream, including F.W. DeKlerk, former Prime Minister of South Africa, and Mandela's daughter, Zindzi, who continues her father's legacy through her work with the children of South Africa.

**LIVES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD: MUHAMMAD ALI** - Saturday, February 6 at 9pm ET/PT

Muhammad Ali is considered one of the greatest athletes of all time. *Lives That Changed the World: Muhammad Ali* shows that he is also one of the most influential men of our era. This unique documentary tells the story of Ali through the human faces and voices of ten lives that he has inspired, including his fight doctor, Ferdie Pacheco, and Etan Thomas, a professional basketball player and poet who was inspired by Ali to work for change.

**SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL'S SOUND REVOLUTION: SOUNDS OF JAZZ** - Monday, February 8 at 8pm ET/PT

Jazz was perhaps the first great American art form of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Award-winning actor Morgan Freeman tells the story of the first few decades of jazz, beginning at the mouth of the Mississippi, in the city widely acknowledged as its birthplace, New Orleans. He follows jazz's journey from its origins as a mixture of African, Classical European and Blues; through the great Dixieland days of Louis Armstrong and King Oliver; to the swing and big band eras of Duke Ellington and Count Basie, when it became the most popular music in the country.

President's Day Lineup:

**AMERICA'S GREATEST MONUMENTS** - Monday, February 15 at 7pm ET/PT

Washington's memorials can be seen like never before – in stunning high-definition. From the Washington Memorial to the Vietnam War Memorial, viewers can learn about the often overlooked stories of how these monuments became the emotional epicenter of our nation.

**PICTURING THE PRESIDENTS** – Premieres Monday, February 15 at 8pm ET/PT

Viewers can go behind the scenes and into the minds of the artists that capture, commemorate and, at times, condemn our presidents. When art and politics collide, the results do not always make the president and his handlers happy. From Elaine De Kooning's abstract portraits of Kennedy to Tim Oliphant's skewering caricatures of the Bushes, there is an often stormy relationship between our presidents and the artists employed to capture their legacy. From the portrait that enraged LBJ to the bad-hair-day photograph that almost cost Lincoln the election, the pictures that elicit reactions are as divisive as the subjects themselves.

**SMITHSONIAN SPOTLIGHT: LINCOLN'S MEN** - Monday, February 15 at 9pm ET/PT

John Nicolay, John Hay and William Stoddard all followed Abraham Lincoln to the White House as his personal secretaries, but became much more. These young men handled schedules, communication and supervised all White House business. From their own hand written accounts, viewers can not only learn about factual accounts of the day-to-day business of a busy White House, but also get a personal portrait of a passionate president from the men who knew him best.

**PICTURING THE PRESIDENT: GEORGE WASHINGTON** – Monday, February 15 at 9:30pm ET/PT

The most famous American portrait, Gilbert Stuart's painting of George Washington, is an unforgettable painting that captures the spirit of the victorious general, stalwart leader and pioneering president of the United States of America. Known as the Lansdowne, the full-length portrait of Washington came to illuminate and symbolize not only a man, but also a fledgling country and revolutionary new leadership.

**WHITE HOUSE REVEALED - Monday, February 15 at 10pm ET/PT**

This special features the people who help run the world's most famous home. They're anonymous to the public, but presidents know their names. They're the devoted doormen, butlers, plumbers, chefs, housekeepers, engineers, and florists who serve president after president behind the scenes. Once-in-a-lifetime occasions happen every week at the White House, and the residence staff is a constant witness to history. Through personal interviews, they reveal the behind-the-scenes action of world-changing events and share intimate moments of the presidency, from First Family birthday parties to preparations for Inauguration Day.

Other February Premieres:

**AMERICA WILD AND WACKY: EPISODE 6 – Friday, February 5 at 8pm ET/PT**

The country's most irreverent festivals are celebrated. From cross-dressing drag queen races in Washington, DC, to fantasy medieval battles in Virginia, from the coolest biker party in South Dakota, to the hottest chili cook-off in Nebraska, no party is too wild or too wacky.

**SYSTEM CRASH: WIRED PLANET– Sunday, February 7 at 8pm ET/PT**

This is the final episode of this four-part series. Our increasingly wired planet has become more and more exposed to breakdowns, some of which can be disastrous. Witness a new kind of communication breakdown, as online global systems grow faster than they can be controlled. See how an exploding system of global communications, plus our growing dependence on it, can equal catastrophic failure.

**MARTIN CLUNES: A MAN AND HIS DOGS –Sunday, February 7 and 14 at 9pm ET/PT**

This two-part program, premiering on consecutive Sundays, investigates the ancestry of dogs and what makes them "man's best friend." From mountains to forests to cities, the roots of our four-legged friends and our relationship with them are traced.

**JAPANESE BOW: BUILT TO KILL – Thursday, February 11 at 8pm ET/PT**

A visually stunning journey into Japan's storied past reveals the secrets of its most prized combat weapon, the Yumi. This killing machine of a weapon serves as a link to Japan's spirit world and its glorious past.

**THE SWORD – premieres Thursday, February 11 and 18 at 9pm ET/PT**

This two-part program, premiering on consecutive Thursdays, explores the violent and virulent history of the sword and its emergence from a hunting tool to a symbol of power and justice. The weapon has decided wars, settled duels, beheaded Medusa, knighted heroes and became a symbol of courage. This action-packed journey traces the development of the sword as a weapon and as a symbol of might and justice.

**ABOUT SMITHSONIAN NETWORKS**

Smithsonian Networks (SNI/SI Networks L.L.C.) is a joint venture between Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution. It was formed to create new channels that showcase scientific, cultural and historical programming largely inspired by the assets of the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum complex. The network features original documentaries, short-subject explorations and innovative and groundbreaking programs highlighting America's historical, cultural and scientific heritage. Visit them on the internet at [www.smithsonianchannel.com](http://www.smithsonianchannel.com).

###

**Contact:**

Josh Gross  
Seldin Gross Communications  
347-432-8300  
jgross@seldingrosspr.com

Drew Seldin  
Seldin Gross Communications  
917-608-6786  
dseldin@seldingrosspr.com