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For more information, contact:

Gayle Shupack, gshupack@mercermuseum.org | 215.345.0210. Ext 131

Long May She Wave Offers a Fresh Take on the American Flag

Doylestown, PA (May 3, 2016) – Arguably one of the most recognizable icons in the world today, the American flag has enjoyed a long history of graphic renderings and artistic reinterpretations. Although the Continental Congress agreed in 1777 that the United States flag be comprised of stars and stripes in red, white and blue, more than a century passed without formal design regulations –yielding a wealth of exuberant and creative manifestations of the national banner. The exhibit ***Long May She Wave: A Graphic History of the American Flag***, on view at the **Mercer Museum from July 2 – November 6**, looks at the many different graphic interpretations of “Old Glory” from Civil War-Era flags and Native American moccasins to political campaign buttons and children’s toys. Presented together, these objects comprise their own genre of folk art.

The eclectic mix of artifacts and memorabilia featured in *Long May She Wave* was collected and curated by award-winning graphic designer, Kit Hinrichs. “The American Flag is a visual history of the country, and the only flag that has had change built into its design,” said Hinrichs. His fascination with the flag was piqued by his acquisition of a 36-star American flag sewn by his great-great-great-great-aunt, in 1865.

In subject and tone, many of the artifacts in *Long May She Wave* capture the public mood and attitude of their era, in times of peace and war, in celebration and at play. The earliest artifact is the 1861 Rodgers Battle flag from the Civil War Era. Other fascinating artifacts include a United States Postage Flag, composed entirely out of postage stamps and cancellation marks, an elaborate beaded Rubin Violin Case, and an anti war placard from 1968 where the flags stripes are rifles with bombers as stars on the canton, an American Flag guitar signed by all of the members of the Dave Matthews Band, and campaign buttons that range from the 1890s to the

1950s. These unique historical objects are balanced with everyday ephemera, putting into historical perspective how all of these objects make up a tapestry of American iconography.

To complement the *Long May She Wave* exhibit, the Mercer Museum is hosting a special program series. Visitors can meet the famous Philadelphia seamstress, Betsy Ross on Saturday, July 9 at 2 p.m. Noted collector, Dr. Jeffrey Kenneth Kohn will discuss the history and evolution of the American flag on Saturday, July 30 at 2 p.m. The Mercer Museum will also conduct walking tours of some of Doylestown's most patriotic buildings, landmarks and memorials on Friday, August 12 at 5:30 p.m. & 7 p.m. The walking tours start at the Mercer Museum's entrance and are \$11 per person. To schedule a tour, call 215-348-9461.

Long May She Wave is locally sponsored by Visit Bucks County, Susan E. Kane, Freeman's Auction, and Curtis and Carolyn Cowgill.

About Kit Hinrichs

One of America's leading graphic designers, Kit Hinrichs is the founder and director of the Stars & Stripes Foundation, a nonprofit educational entity dedicated to conserving, restoring and chronicling the American flag and the culture and history of America through the depiction of the national banner over the years. The Stars & Stripes Collection has been shown in several noteworthy museums across the United States, and has been featured in several books authored by Hinrichs, including *100 American Flags: A Unique Collection of Old Glory Memorabilia* (2008, Ten Speed Press), *Long May She Wave: A Graphic History of the American Flag* (2001, Ten Speed Press), and *Stars & Stripes* (1987, Chronicle Books). As a designer, Hinrichs has garnered countless awards in every area of graphic design, including branding, exhibitions, packaging, print and digital communications, and magazine and book publishing. He continues to serve as creative director of Studio Hinrichs, opened in San Francisco in 2009, and formerly was a partner of Pentagram, an international consultancy, for the prior 23 years.

About the Mercer Museum

The Mercer Museum, one of Bucks County's premier tourist attractions, offers visitors a unique window into pre-Industrial America as seen through the implements used in everyday life. The

Museum's collection includes more than 40,000 objects exhibiting the tools of more than 60 different crafts and trades, providing one of the world's most comprehensive portraits of material culture in America. The museum celebrates its Centennial in 2016. The Mercer Museum is located at Pine & Ashland Streets in Doylestown and is open for self-guided exploration 7 days a week. For more information, call 215-345-0210, or visit mercermuseum.org.

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