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**Mercer Museum Hosts 2018 National History Day
Regional Competition at Ursinus College**

DOYLESTOWN, PA: (March 9, 2018) – The Bucks County Historical Society is pleased to announce that the 2018 National History Day regional competition for Bucks and Montgomery Counties will be held on Saturday, March 24, 2018 from 9 A.M to 2 P.M. at Ursinus College in Collegeville, PA.

Facilitated by staff and volunteers of the Bucks County Historical Society that oversees the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle in Doylestown, PA., and in collaboration with professors and staff at Ursinus College, this annual competition allows Bucks and Montgomery County high school and middle school students to take history beyond the classroom.

National History Day is an annual academic enrichment program for students in grades 6-12 that encourages thoughtful historical research, project-based learning and a dose of friendly competition, as individuals or as a group, in one of five distinct categories: exhibits, papers, websites, documentary films and performances. More than 175 students from Bucks and Montgomery counties participate in the regional event, and regional winners will move on to the state level competition.

Guided by an annual theme, students are encouraged to choose a topic that matches their personal interests. The 2018 theme is “Conflict and Compromise in History”. This year’s entries cover a wide range of topics including the Salem Witch Trials, Irish War of

Independence, American Suffrage Leaders, the Prohibition of Alcohol, the Iran-Hostage Crisis, the Space Race, the genocide in Rwanda and the Legalization of Gay Marriage. Bucks County Historical Society President and Executive Director Kyle McKoy has been involved with the National History Day program for years, most recently in Arizona and Indiana. "National History Day is similar to a Science Fair, only it is focused on history. The latitude that the students have in presentation choice appeals to students of all learning abilities. This year's theme provides an opportunity for students to overcome the idea that history is mere 'dates and facts', and allows them to drill down into historical content and develop deeper perspectives and understanding." says McKoy. "The skills of conducting research, identifying credible sources, and publicly presenting their findings are crucial to increasing civic engagement in young people. These skills are important at a time when so much misinformation can be reached with a single click," she adds.

Founded in 1974 at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, the National History Day Contest was created to inspire students to conduct original historical research. During its 44-year history the contest has grown into an international competition that has impacted millions of students and teachers.

National History Day has been held at Ursinus College since 1996 and has resulted in a fruitful collaboration between Mercer Museum and Ursinus History Department staff. Program coordinator Ross Doughty, professor of history, notes that approximately one dozen Ursinus students serve as assistants and judges every year, and admires the fact that Ursinus history major alumni remain involved, even after graduation. "It's important to get young students interested in history and working with historical sources," he said. "By doing real historical research, they learn what history is all about."

"National History Day helps students develop confidence and further their critical thinking and research skills, said Melissa Jay, Coordinator of Education and Regional Coordinator for National History Day at the Mercer Museum. "Most importantly, the program stimulates and rewards student initiative, creativity, and excellence," she added.

Professor Ross reminisces, “When I was in high school, we had a science fair and that was it—there was no equivalent for students who like me were interested in history. That’s why I was delighted to become connected with National History Day. It allows students to exercise their imaginations, and without imagination, history is impossible because you have to be able to place yourself in the past in order to even begin to understand it. Not only have I met hundreds of eager young historians, but I've had a chance to observe the dedication of their teachers. I've also made some very good friends at the Mercer Museum, especially Melissa Jay and Corey Amsler. But perhaps the most gratifying aspect of this long relationship has been the unstinting support from almost all departments and offices here at Ursinus. Everyone supports National History Day and everyone pitches in, especially our history majors.”

This year marks a special turn for the Bucks and Montgomery Counties regional competition, as Professor Doughty will be retiring from his post at Ursinus College after 43 years at the school. In Professor Doughty’s honor, the Bucks County Historical Association has created the “Ross Doughty History Award”, a new annual prize to be presented for the first time in 2018 at the regional competition. The winning student project will be one that is focused on Pennsylvania history and the winner will receive a \$250 monetary award.

“I am especially gratified by the prize established in my name because it recognizes the importance of the connection between Ursinus College and the local community. National History Day at Ursinus has been making a community connection for over 20 years, and I'm very proud of that.”

The National History Day regional event on Saturday, March 24, 2018 begins at 9 A.M to 2:00 P.M, with an award ceremony open to the public at 1:15 P.M.

For more information, go to nhdbucksmont.org.

About National History Day® (NHD): NHD is a non-profit education organization headquartered in College Park, MD. Established in 1974, NHD promotes an appreciation for historical research among middle and high school students through multiple annual programs. More than half a million students participate in the annual National History Day Contest. These research-based projects are entered into contests at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD provides professional development opportunities and curriculum materials for educators of all levels. NHD is sponsored in part by HISTORY®, Jostens, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Park Service, Southwest Airlines, the Joe Weider Foundation, and the WEM 2000 Foundation of the Dorsey & Whitney Foundation. For more information, visit nhd.org.

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 50,000 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 Mercer Museum is located at [84 South Pine Street](#) in Doylestown and is open for self-guided exploration 7 days a week. For more information, call [215-345-0210](tel:215-345-0210), or visit mercermuseum.org.

About Ursinus College:

One of the nation's "Colleges that Change Lives," Ursinus College is a residential undergraduate liberal arts college with 1,500 students that is widely recognized for its first-year Common Intellectual Experience. Founded in 1869, Ursinus provides a rigorous curriculum that re-envisioning a liberal education and presents students with an inquiry-driven academic experience. Ursinus's \$100 million *Keep the Promise* capital campaign culminates during the college's sesquicentennial anniversary in 2019-20. The tree-lined, 170-acre campus is located 25 miles northwest of Philadelphia in Collegeville, Pa. Visit Ursinus at www.ursinus.edu, follow on Twitter (@ursinuscollege) and on Facebook (Ursinus College).