

Virginia Capitol Foundation

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NEWS RELEASE

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The Virginia Capitol Foundation premieres *Keepers of the Flame* at the Virginia Capitol

RICHMOND, VA –Capitol visitors will soon learn more about Virginia’s central role in American history, thanks to a new film, *Keepers of the Flame*, produced by the Virginia Capitol Foundation with assistance from actor, filmmaker, and Virginia native Tim Reid. The 20-minute visually-interactive film will debut in the Virginia Capitol Visitor Extension on Thursday evening, October 25, 2012 in the official premiere. The film will be available for viewing seven days a week during regular tour hours beginning on Monday, October 29, 2012.

The film features compelling stories of individuals who have made an impact on Virginia history – from well-known figures like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington to High School Student Barbara Johns who proved that everyone can make a difference. This film, coupled with the Capitol’s ongoing educational programs and exhibits, tells the story of Virginia’s representative government and celebrates the Commonwealth’s central role in American history with a goal of inspiring viewers to appreciate and become involved with public service.

The production was filmed in Appomattox, Capitol Square, and St. John’s Church in Richmond, Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Petersburg to highlight some of the well-known, as well as lesser-known, stories of courage from the Commonwealth’s rich history. Narrator Brit Hume opens the film reciting “Light the Soul”, an original poem by former Virginia Supreme Court Justice John Charles Thomas, who is also a Foundation Trustee. The film concludes with a rousing speech from Thomas Jefferson, as interpreted by Colonial Williamsburg’s Bill Barker, to the YMCA Model General Assembly in the Capitol in which he encourages the students to continue to “raise the level of goodness in this very great country of ours.”

Chairman of the Board S. Buford Scott shared, “*Keepers of the Flame* will be the first educational film produced for the State Capitol. It has a two-pronged mission to tell the stories of those Virginians throughout history who have kept the flame of freedom, liberty, and democracy alive and flourishing, and to tell the history of America’s first monument to democracy. We look forward to hosting our future visitors as we encourage them to become modern-day ‘Keepers of the Flame’.”

“The Trustees of the Virginia Capitol Foundation express deepest gratitude to the foundations, businesses, and individuals who enabled the Foundation to produce the film, which is dedicated to the school children of Virginia,” Mr. Scott added. Major donors to the project are: Robins

Foundation, Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, Gwathmey Memorial Trust, Windsor Foundation, Garland & Agnes Taylor Gray Foundation, a supporting organization of The Community Foundation serving Richmond and Central Virginia; Corporate Foundations for Philip Morris USA, Dominion Resources, Genworth, MeadWestvaco, and Wells Fargo; and many generous individuals.

The Virginia State Capitol first opened in 1788, and the Virginia General Assembly decided to move into the newly constructed statehouse on October 25 of that year, 224 years ago on the night of the premiere. Designed by Thomas Jefferson, it was the country's first public building created expressly for our new government. House of Delegates Clerk and Trustee of the Virginia Capitol Foundation G. Paul Nardo shared "The Virginia Capitol is a living landmark to American self-government as the home to the Virginia General Assembly, the oldest English-speaking deliberative body operating continuously in the Western Hemisphere." Senate Clerk Susan Clarke Schaar, who also serves as secretary for the Foundation, underscored the primary mission of the film and its appropriateness for Mr. Jefferson's Capitol stating "*Keepers of the Flame* will help inspire the next generation to public service and fulfill Mr. Jefferson's vision which we chose to be inscribed at the visitor entrance of the Capitol." Thomas Jefferson wrote in a letter to Richard Price, January 8, 1789, "Whenever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government."

Tim Reid, a Virginia native who made his name in Hollywood in numerous TV and feature films, including "WKRP in Cincinnati" and "Sister-Sister," and is the co-founder, with his wife Daphne Maxwell Reid, of New Millennium Studios in Petersburg, said he was heartened that the Virginia Capitol Foundation chose a Virginia company for this important project. "We are incorporating some of the latest technology in the entertainment industry today to produce this film for the Capitol. In partnering my production company, Obsidian Productions, with Dreams Factory and In Your Ear Music, both out of Richmond, and the lens technology developed by Vision 3 Imaging in Northern Virginia, we will be able to offer a unique experience to the Capitol's future visitors."

Said VCF Executive Director Alice Lynch, "As the Commonwealth strives to increase economic development activities, the Foundation leaders are very pleased to support outstanding Virginia businesses in this important endeavor. From the scriptwriter, to the film crew, to the director, to the actors, the best of Virginia talent helped to bring the stories to the screen for the more than 100,000 school children and tourists who come to the Virginia State Capitol annually."

The Virginia Capitol Foundation is the nonprofit advocate for the Capitol, Capitol Square, and Executive Mansion, enhancing the educational, cultural, and economic potential of Capitol Square's historic treasures through program development, community engagement, and fundraising.

The Virginia Capitol Foundation Board of Trustees: Officers - S. Buford Scott, Chairman; John Charles Thomas, Vice Chairman; Susan Clarke Schaar, Secretary; Diana J. Beran, Treasurer, Trustees - Samuel W. Daniel, Susan Y. Dorsey, Janet T. Geldzahler, Adrienne G. Hines, Lisa M. Hicks-Thomas, Brian J. Moran, Joseph W. Montgomery, G. Paul Nardo, Anita O. Poston, Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr., and Wendy Church Sydnor. The staff of the Virginia Capitol Foundation: Executive Director Alice Dunn Lynch and Office Assistant Jane P. Rhodes.

For information about the Virginia Capitol Foundation and the Virginia State Capitol including visitor services, go to www.VirginiaCapitol.gov.