

PRESS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

Entertainment Legend and Social Philanthropist, Dr. William H. Cosby, Jr. and U.S. Senator Ben Cardin Co-Chair Public Unveiling of the Benjamin Banneker Memorial Prototype at National Archives Black History Month Event

Washington, DC, February 11, 2008 – America’s Trailblazing Celebrity Dad, **Dr. William H. Cosby, Jr.**, and **U.S. Senator Ben Cardin** [MD], are serving as Honorary Co-Chairs of the **Public Unveiling** of the **Banneker Memorial** prototype at the **National Archives Museum**. The **Black History Month** program will be held on **Friday, February 15**, from **6:30 to 8:30 p.m.** in the **McGowan Theatre** of the **National Archives Museum** located at 7th and Pennsylvania Ave., NW. The **Banneker Memorial** is only the second ever authorized by Congress [**P.L. 105-355**] to commemorate an African-American for placement within its *monumental core*. The **MLK Memorial**, now in its 21st year, is the first.

After more than eleven years of pursuit to establish a world class memorial to colonial American hero, **Benjamin Banneker**, the *Washington Interdependence Council (WIC)*, Administrators of the **Banneker Memorial**, is unveiling the bronze prototype of the statue. The overall concept for the memorial calls for three design elements: **1)** a bronze statue on a pedestal base inside **Banneker Overlook Circle**; **2)** a 30-40 foot **ClockTower** at the island directly in front of the **L’Enfant Plaza** courtyard; and **3)** a small *Founding Architect’s Visitors Center* near the Maryland Ave. axis, midway between that point and the 10th Street entrance at Independence Ave., SW. *WIC* is also the facilitator of **L’Enfant Plaza’s \$138 million** en progress renovation.

Internationally renowned CA sculptor, **Ms. Tina Allen**, will be present to discuss her creative approach to the design of the memorial based on documented descriptions of his physical and personal attributes and the only two documented images of him, a crude etching featured on his 1795 almanac, and an earlier sketch. The bronze statue which will be unveiled enables the *Washington Interdependence Council* to begin the process of seeking design approval before the **U.S. Commission on Fine Arts**, the final major step in the commemorative protocol.

Additional *VIP* Guest Panelists include **Dr. Kevin Marvel**, Executive Officer of the **American Astronomical Society**; **Dr. Michael Eric Dyson**, Noted Author and Professor at **Georgetown University** [invited]; Celebrated Poet and Author, **Mr. Ty Gray-El**, who will perform a special *Ode to Banneker* which he penned especially for the occasion. Special **Trailblazer Awards of Recognition** will be presented to **Dr. Dorothy Height** and **Dr. Frank Smith** for their service as administrators of the **Mary McLeod Bethune** and **African-American Civil War Memorials**, respectively. Celebrity Actor, **Mr. Clayton LeBouef**, of **HBO’s *The Wire*; *Homicide*; *Law & Order*, *Something the Lord Made*** et al. programs is serving as Emcee of the special event which is free and open to the public. For more information, call **202/357-5271** or **202/387-3380**.

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