



**West Virginia Folklife Program awarded American Folklife Center's Henry Reed Fund Award
to present concert with Ballad Singer Phyllis Marks**

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Charleston— The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, is pleased to announce it has been awarded a 2016 Henry Reed Fund Award from the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to support a concert by West Virginia ballad singer Phyllis Marks. The concert program will include a performance, question-answer session, and reception, and is to be held on Thursday, September 8, 2016, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the historic MacFarland-Hubbard House, headquarters of the West Virginia Humanities Council (1310 Kanawha Blvd. E) in Charleston. The program, which is free and open to the public, will be recorded and archived at the Library of Congress.

Phyllis Marks, age 89, is according to folklorist Gerry Milnes the last active ballad singer in the state who "learned by heart" via oral transmission. Marks was recorded for the Library of Congress in 1978 and has performed for 62 years at the West Virginia State Folk Festival in her hometown of Glenville. Phyllis Marks is among West Virginia's finest traditional musicians and a master of unaccompanied Appalachian ballad singing. Following her performance, Marks will give a brief interview with West Virginia University musicology professor and West Virginia native Travis Stimeling.

The American Folklife Center's (AFC) Henry Reed Fund was established in 2004 in honor of West Virginia old-time fiddler Henry Reed with an initial gift from founding AFC director and fiddler Alan Jabbour. The fund provides small awards to support activities directly involving folk artists, especially when the activities reflect, draw upon, or strengthen the archival collections of the AFC. This year, Henry Reed Funds were awarded to two projects—one to Canadian folk singer Mélisande Gélinas-Fauteux to support research on North American French-language folk song and the other to West Virginia state folklorist Emily Hilliard for this "West Virginia Folklife Presents Ballad Singer Phyllis Marks" program and documentation project.

The West Virginia Folklife Program is a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council and is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Folk & Traditional Arts Program. West Virginia Folklife is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, presentation, and support of West Virginia's vibrant cultural heritage and living traditions.

For more information on the concert and West Virginia Folklife Program, visit <http://wvhumanities.org/programs/west-virginia-folklife-program/> or contact Emily Hilliard at hilliard@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500.

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The West Virginia Humanities Council is a nonprofit corporation governed by a board of directors whose members are drawn from all parts of West Virginia. It is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and by contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.