



PRESS RELEASE

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Humanities Council Announces Six New *History Alive!* Characters

Charleston, WV — The popular *History Alive!* program of the West Virginia Humanities Council announces its roster of historical figures available for presentations beginning July 22 through October 31, 2021. The characters now available are:

- **Walt Disney**, animation pioneer and famed creator of Mickey Mouse, portrayed by James Froemel of Maidsville,
- **Abigail Adams**, wife of America's founding father and 2nd president John Adams, portrayed by JoAnn Peterson of Kingwood,
- **Francis Pierpont**, considered the "founding father" of West Virginia, portrayed by Travis Henline of Wheeling,
- **Pearl S. Buck**, West Virginia-born author of "The Good Earth" and over 100 other books, portrayed by Missy McCollam of Beverly,
- **Bessie Smith**, the "Empress of the Blues," portrayed by Doris Fields of Beckley,
- **Colonel Ruby Bradley**, trailblazing U.S. Army nurse and veteran of World War II and Korea, portrayed by Becky Park of Charleston,
- **Gabriel Arthur**, 17th century frontiersman, portrayed by Doug Wood of Hurricane,
- **Nellie Bly**, 19th century reporter, portrayed by JoAnn Peterson of Kingwood,
- **Stonewall Jackson**, Civil War general, portrayed by Doug Riley of Tunnelton,
- **Ostenaco**, Cherokee leader, portrayed by Doug Wood of Hurricane,
- **Theodore Roosevelt**, 26th president, portrayed by Gene Worthington of Fayetteville,
- **Sacagawea**, Lewis & Clark Expedition Native American guide and translator, portrayed by Mary Dailey of Meadow Bridge,
- **Harriet Tubman**, Underground Railroad leader, portrayed by Ilene Evans of Thomas,
- **Mark Twain**, American literary icon, portrayed by Doug Riley of Tunnelton, and

- **Charles Schulz**, cartoonist and creator of the beloved “Peanuts” comic strip, portrayed by James Froemel of Maidsville.

The characters of Walt Disney, Francis Pierpont, Abigail Adams, and Bessie Smith are new to the program. The character of Colonel Ruby Bradley rejoins the program after several years’ hiatus. Pearl S. Buck, who was last portrayed by Karen Vuranch in 2010, returns as performed by Missy McCollam in time for the 2021 bicentennial of Pocahontas County, where the famous author was born. The character of Pearl Buck will be available for bookings starting September 1, 2020.

The *History Alive!* program brings historical figures to life through first-person portrayals by presenters who have conducted scholarly research on their character. The programs provide entertaining and educational experiences by allowing audiences to explore history through interaction with important people from the past. Presentations are available for \$150 to a variety of both nonprofit and for-profit organizations throughout West Virginia including schools, libraries, museums, historical societies, civic groups, festivals, associations, parks, businesses and others.

Information on all the *History Alive!* characters and how to schedule a presentation can be found at www.wvhumanities.org or by contacting Humanities Council Program Officer Kyle Warmack at 304-346-8500 or warmack@wvhumanities.org.

The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonpartisan nonprofit, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council is supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and 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.
