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Media Contact: Greg Frey (202) 268-6524
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2004 COMMEMORATIVE STAMP PROGRAM CELEBRATES 'THE ARTS IN STAMPS'

WASHINGTON – The fantastic world of Dr. Seuss, the natural living beauty of a Pacific coral reef, the pioneering expedition to the American West by Lewis and Clark, the mystery and majesty of clouds and a wide variety of arts and artists are among the subjects honored on new commemorative stamps for 2004, the U.S. Postal Service announced today.

“U.S. commemorative stamps give us a window on the American experience,” said David Failor, executive director of Stamp Services for the Postal Service. “Stamps renew our awareness of the wonders of nature, honor incredible human achievement, reflect patriotism, pride and social concern, and celebrate the artistic expression of the human spirit.”

The 2004 program begins with the issuance of the Pacific Coral Reef stamps showing a colorful view of life on a reef. The Year of the Monkey stamp brightens the start of the Lunar New Year. The Love: Candy Hearts stamp arrives in mid-January, allowing plenty of time to mail Valentine’s Day greetings. The popular Black Heritage series continues with a stamp honoring African-American actor, singer, athlete and activist Paul Robeson. And, two new stamps suitable for wedding invitations feature garden flowers.

Theodor Seuss Geisel, known to most Americans as Dr. Seuss, appears on a stamp with some of his memorable characters in the spring. A stamped card will mark the 250th Anniversary of Columbia University. Athlete Wilma Rudolph becomes the fifth honoree in the Distinguished Americans series. The life and works of musician and composer Henry Mancini is celebrated with a stamp. A stamp marks the 50th Anniversary of the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Leading into summer, the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial stamp and a special 32-page “prestige booklet” containing two additional stamp designs commemorating the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the American West both debut. Four choreographers and the art of sculptor Isamu Noguchi are featured on panes of

20 stamps. The completion of the National World War II Memorial in Washington is noted with a stamp honoring the achievements of Americans who served in the war.

The issuance of the Summer Olympic Games stamp coincides with the XXVIII Olympiad in Athens. The Historic Preservation series continues with the issuance of a stamped card commemorating the 300th Anniversary of Harriton House in Bryn Mawr, Penn.

R. Buckminster Fuller, renowned inventor and creator of the geodesic dome, is honored with a stamp. The Literary Arts series continues with a stamp saluting James Baldwin, one of the foremost American writers of the 20th century. The latest stamp in the American Treasures series features Martin Johnson Heade's painting "Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth." The 150th anniversary of the historic Civil War-era sailing warship USS Constellation is commemorated on a stamp.

Autumn sees the issuance of stamps depicting the Art of the American Indian, coinciding with the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington. The Sickle Cell Disease Awareness stamp focuses the nation's attention on an important health issue. Theater legend Moss Hart is honored with a stamp marking the 100th anniversary of his birth. Cloudscapes, a pane of 15 stamps featuring basic cloud formations, joins the line-up of fascinating stamp subjects.

The holiday season brings the issuance of four Holiday Ornaments stamps, a new Christmas stamp depicting Lorenzo Monaco's painting "Madonna and Child" and new versions of the Kwanzaa and Hanukkah stamps.

Starting Nov. 24, see the 2004 U.S. commemorative stamp program by visiting the Postal Service's Web site at www.usps.com. Select "News and Events" then "Philatelic News," and open the online version of this news release.

Current U.S. stamps and stationery, as well as a free catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Custom-framed art prints of original stamp art are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits more than 141 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$68.9 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume — some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year — and serves seven million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.

2004 U.S. COMMEMORATIVE STAMP PROGRAM

Nature of America: Pacific Coral Reef

This pane of 10 stamps depicting sea creatures is the sixth in the Nature of America series promoting appreciation of America's major plant and animal communities. Featuring a coral reef near Guam, a U.S. territory in the western Pacific Ocean, this stamp pane is the first in the series to show the beauty and complexity of an aquatic ecosystem.

Lunar New Year: Year of the Monkey

To commemorate the Year of the Monkey, which begins Jan. 22, 2004, stamp designer Clarence Lee created an intricate paper-cut design of a monkey, the ninth of twelve animals associated with the Chinese lunar calendar. The Chinese characters – drawn in grass-style calligraphy by Lau Bun – translate into English as “Year of the Monkey.” The greeting “Happy New Year!” is in English. This is the last of 12 designs in the series.

Love: Candy Hearts

Candy hearts adorn this year's Love stamp. These little tokens of affection bearing short-and-to-the-point messages have been a Valentine's Day tradition for more than a century. The Love stamp series started in 1973.

Black Heritage: Paul Robeson

This 27th stamp in the Black Heritage series honors Paul Robeson, who achieved worldwide renown as an actor, singer, activist and athlete. Robeson is remembered not only for his prodigious talents as a performer, but also for his tireless and uncompromising commitment to civil rights and social justice.

Garden Bouquet (37-cent) Garden Botanical (60-cent)

Two stamps designs are available for use on wedding stationery and for other occasions such as Valentine's and Mother's Day cards and anniversaries. The 37-cent stamp features a bouquet of white lilacs and large pink roses. The 60-cent stamp depicts a drawing of mostly pink wild roses.

Historic Preservation: Columbia University Stamped Card

This stamped postal card in the Historic Preservation series commemorates the 250th anniversary of the founding of Columbia University. First established as King's College by King George II in 1754, its name was changed to Columbia College after the Revolutionary War.

Theodor Seuss Geisel

This stamp honors Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, on the 100th anniversary of his birth. A Pulitzer Prize-winning author and illustrator, Dr. Seuss introduced countless children to the joys of reading.

Distinguished Americans: Wilma Rudolph

With this fifth issuance in the Distinguished American series, the U.S. Postal Service honors Wilma Rudolph, who overcame a childhood plagued by serious illness to become one of the nation's greatest athletes.

U.S. Air Force Academy

This stamp issuance will mark the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force Academy. The stamp's focal point is the Cadet Chapel, the most visually compelling structure on the grounds of the academy.

Henry Mancini

This stamp honors Henry Mancini, one of the most successful composers in the history of television and film as well as a popular pianist and concert conductor. Mancini's legacy of Grammy- and Oscar-winning scores includes music from the television series "Peter Gunn," and films such as "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and "The Pink Panther."

Lewis and Clark Prestige Booklet

To commemorate the bicentennial of the official launch of the Lewis and Clark expedition on May 14, 1804, a special 32-page prestige booklet will be issued. The booklet contains two semi-jumbo stamp designs in self-adhesive panes of ten. Featured are individual portraits of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

Lewis and Clark Bicentennial

This self-adhesive stamp, issued separately from the prestige booklet in panes of 20 stamps, depicts Lewis and Clark standing on a promontory surveying the countryside.

American Choreographers

This pane of 20 stamps honors four extraordinary choreographers: George Balanchine, Martha Graham, Agnes de Mille and Alvin Ailey.

Isamu Noguchi

Five designs featuring five different works of art on a 20-stamp pane honor sculptor Isamu Noguchi on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

National World War II Memorial

This stamp honors the achievements and ideals of Americans who served during the Second World War. The stamp depicts the National World War II Memorial and is scheduled to be released to coincide with the dedication of the memorial.

Summer Olympic Games – Athens

This stamp continues the tradition of honoring the spirit of athleticism and international unity that the Olympic Games inspire. The stamp will be issued to coincide with the games of the XXVIII Olympiad, which will be held August 13-29 in Athens, Greece.

Historic Preservation: Harriton House

This stamped card in the Historic Preservation series commemorates the 300th anniversary of Harriton House in Bryn Mawr, Penn. This colonial-era home was the residence of Charles Thomson, who served as Secretary to the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1789.

R. Buckminster Fuller

An inventor, architect, engineer and philosopher, R. Buckminster Fuller has been called one of America's most original thinkers. This stamp honors Fuller on the 50th anniversary of his patent for the geodesic dome.

Literary Arts: James Baldwin

This 20th stamp in the Literary Arts series honors James Baldwin, one of the foremost American writers of the 20th century. Baldwin's essays, plays, novels, short stories and poems explore various subjects, including race relations, the arts, love and sexuality, and always show their author's strong moral conscience. Baldwin's work made him a leading intellectual figure during the years of the civil rights movement in America.

American Treasures: Martin Johnson Heade

A work by Martin Johnson Heade was chosen for this fourth issuance in the American Treasures series. Heade is considered one of the finest 19th-century painters of landscapes and still life. The painting "Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth," from the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, is featured on the stamp.

USS Constellation

This stamp marks the 150th anniversary of the USS Constellation, the last all-sail-powered warship built by the U.S. Navy and the last Civil War-era naval vessel still afloat.

Art of the American Indian

This pane of 10 stamps features photographs of American Indian artifacts dating from around the 11th century A.D. to circa 1969.

Sickle Cell Disease Awareness

The Sickle Cell Disease Awareness stamp continues a tradition at the U.S. Postal Service of raising public consciousness of health and social issues. Sickle cell disease is common throughout the world, and people of all races should be screened to determine if they are carriers of the inherited sickle cell trait or if they have the disease.

Cloudscapes

Arranged according to altitude, nine of the 10 basic cloud genera are pictured on this pane of 15 stamps.

Moss Hart

Award-winning dramatist and director Moss Hart is honored on a stamp marking the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Holiday Ornaments

These four stamps feature painted glass Santa ornaments. Nestled in tissue paper, these shiny Santas evoke happy memories of lights, tinsel and other favorite holiday decorations.

Holiday Celebrations: Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a non-religious African-American holiday that takes place over seven days from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1. It draws on African traditions and takes its name from the Swahili phrase for "first fruits."

Holiday Celebrations: Hanukkah

Hanukkah is a joyous yearly festival spanning eight days and nights, celebrated around the world.

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