

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**SINGER, ACTOR, ATHLETE AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST PAUL ROBESON TO BE
HONORED ON NEW POSTAGE STAMP**

Robeson to be 27th Stamp in Popular Black Heritage Stamp Series

WASHINGTON – Paul Robeson — remembered not only for his prodigious talents as a performer but also for his tireless and uncompromising commitment to civil rights and social justice — will soon receive one of the nation’s highest recognitions when the U.S. Postal Service issues a new commemorative postage stamp in his honor.

Free and open to the public, the first day of issue ceremony for the Paul Robeson stamp is scheduled for 10 A.M. on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2004, at Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall, on the campus of Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.



The stamp will be the 27th stamp in the Black Heritage series. The Black Heritage series began in 1978 with the issuance of the Harriet Tubman commemorative stamp.

“The Paul Robeson stamp in the Black Heritage series will serve as a lasting tribute to the individual achievements and contributions of African Americans,” said Murry E. Weatherall, vice president of Diversity Development for the Postal Service, who will dedicate the stamp.

“The Postal Service is extremely proud of the Black Heritage series and extremely proud to add Robeson’s name to the distinguished list that makes up this stamp series,” he added.

“The U.S. Postal Service commemoration of Paul Robeson in the Black Heritage postage stamp series is a fitting tribute to a man who symbolized excellence,” said Princeton University President Shirley M. Tilghman. “Princeton University is honored to host this celebration of a distinguished resident of the Princeton community whose legacy as an artist, activist and intellectual continues to be recognized worldwide.”

“The issuance of the Paul Robeson commemorative stamp is a tribute to my father’s lifelong record of extraordinary achievement, indomitable courage, and dedicated humanism,” said Paul Robeson, Jr.

“The image of the stamp reflects his enveloping smile, the gentleness in his eyes, and the dignity of his bearing. In 1958, he said: ‘This belief in the oneness of humankind, about which I have often spoken in concerts and elsewhere, has existed within me side by side with my deep attachment to the cause of my own race. I do not think, however, that my sentiments are contradictory...there truly is a kinship among us all, a basis for mutual respect and brotherly love.’

“His life leaves a powerful legacy to the world — a vision of a humanistic renewal for our 21st century,” he added.

Robeson achieved worldwide fame as an actor, singer, athlete and activist. He joins 26 other outstanding African-American activists, theorists, educators and leaders honored by the Black Heritage series, including Martin Luther King, Jr.; Benjamin Banneker; Dr. Carter G. Woodson; Madam C.J. Walker; Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz); Patricia Roberts Harris; Roy Wilkins; Langston Hughes; and Thurgood Marshall, who was honored in 2003.

Robeson was born on April 9, 1898, in Princeton, N.J. His broad range of talents was evident as early as high school, where he was an outstanding student and athlete. In 1915, he entered Rutgers College (now Rutgers University) on a scholarship and became the third African American to attend the school. He graduated as class valedictorian in 1919. Robeson was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and an All-American football player.

From 1920 to 1923, Robeson helped pay his way through Columbia Law School in New York City by working as an athlete and a performer. He played professional football, served as assistant football coach at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and starred in the 1922 play “Taboo” in New York and in London (where it was renamed “Voodoo”). Robeson was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

After graduating from law school, Robeson briefly worked in a law firm, but he resigned after a white secretary refused to take dictation from him. By 1924, he had devoted himself to his career as a performer, playing the lead roles in productions of two Eugene O’Neill plays: “All God’s Chillun Got Wings” and “The Emperor Jones.” He played numerous stage roles during his career, but he was best known for his interpretation of the title character in Shakespeare’s “Othello.”

Robeson was renowned worldwide for his talents as a singer. He helped establish African-American spirituals as a legitimate American art form. In addition to his famous repertoire of spirituals, Robeson became well-known for performing and interpreting folk songs from around the world. “Ol’ Man River,” from the musical “Showboat,” became his signature song.

Between 1925 and 1942, Robeson also appeared in several American and British movies, including the “The Emperor Jones,” “Show Boat,” “King Solomon’s Mines,” “Jericho,” and his favorite, “The Proud

Valley.” His image became the personification of human dignity. Discouraged by the limited roles available to black actors in Hollywood, Robeson announced in 1942 he would no longer appear in films.

Well known as an activist, Robeson was an outspoken participant in labor and peace movements, and his public appearances were infused with his strong political beliefs, especially his principled stand against racism in the U.S. and around the world. He was opposed to colonialism in Africa and worked to assist and support African liberation movements. Alarmed by the spread of fascism in Europe, Robeson was also a prominent supporter of the Allied war effort during World War II. In 1945, the NAACP awarded him its highest honor for achievement among African Americans, the prestigious Spingarn Medal.

Robeson died on Jan. 23, 1976, at the age of 77. His posthumous honors reflect his wide range of accomplishments: In 1978 he was honored by the United Nations for his opposition to apartheid in South Africa, in 1995 he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame, and in 1998 he received a Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement. Many schools, community centers and theaters have been named for him, as well as numerous academic and cultural institutions.

Richard Sheaff of Scottsdale, Ariz., was the designer and art director for the stamp. The stamp art is a detail of a circa 1943 photograph of Robeson. Although the photo-grapher is unknown, an inscription by Robeson in the lower left corner of the print suggests that Montreal-based photographers Annette and Basil Zarov made the original photograph.

One hundred thirty million Paul Robeson self-adhesive stamps will be printed for the January 2004 issuance.

To see the Paul Robeson stamp, locate the online version of this press release at www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm.

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

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue: *Paul Robeson*
 Item Number: 455400
 Denomination & Type of Issue: 37-cent Commemorative
 Format: Pane of 20 (1 design)
 Series: *Black Heritage*
 Issue Date & City: January 20, 2004, Princeton, NJ 08540
 Photograph: Attributed to Annette and Basil Zarov, Montreal, Canada
 Designer: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
 Engraver: Southern Graphic
 Art Director: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
 Typographer: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
 Modeler: Donald Woo
 Manufacturing Process: Gravure
 Printer: Sennett Security Products (SSP)
 Printed at: American Packaging Corporation, Columbus, WI
 Press Type: Champlain, Roto 3
 Stamps per Pane: 20
 Print Quantity: 130 million stamps
 Paper Type: Prephosphored, Type I
 Adhesive Type: Pressure-sensitive
 Processed at: Unique Binders, Fredericksburg, VA
 Colors: Gray, Black, Cool grey, PMS 181 (Red)
 Stamp Orientation: Vertical
 Image Area (w x h): 0.84 x 1.41 in./21.336 x 35.814 mm
 Overall Size (w x h): 0.99 x 1.56 in./25.146 x 39.624 mm
 Pane Size (w x h): 5.94 x 7.25 in./150.87 x 184.15 mm
 Plate Size: 360 stamps per revolution
 Plate Numbers: "S" followed by four (4) single digits
 Marginal Markings: © 2003 USPS • Plate numbers in four corners • Plate position diagram • Price
 • Four barcodes and text on back of pane
 Catalog Item Number(s): 455420 Block of 4 — \$1.48
 455430 Block of 10 — \$3.70
 455440 Full Pane of 20 — \$7.40
 455461 First Day Cover — \$0.75
 455493 Full Pane w/First Day Cover — \$8.15

HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE POSTMARK

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamps at their local post office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to: PAUL ROBESON
 COMMEMORATIVE STAMP, POSTMASTER, 213 CARNEGIE CENTER
 PRINCETON NJ 08540-9991

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by February 20, 2004.

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and postal stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by writing to:
 INFORMATION FULFILLMENT, DEPT 6270, US POSTAL SERVICE, PO BOX 219014, KANSAS CITY MO
 64121-9014, or by calling 1 800 STAMP-24.

First day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.