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USCHS Celebrates Constitution Day by “Fostering Informed Citizenship”

WASHINGTON – October 1, 2019 – On September 17th, 2019, the United States Capitol Historical Society (USCHS) hosted “Fostering Informed Citizenship” in the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, a program examining the state of civic knowledge and its impact on the public’s understanding of the Constitution and legislative process. Convention delegates signed the Constitution on September 17th, 1787, and annually this date is observed as Constitution Day.

Beth Plemmons, CEO of the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, gave a warm welcome to the audience gathered in the South Orientation Theater. Following her remarks, Jane L. Campbell, President/CEO of the USCHS, thanked guests for marking Constitution Day with so meaningful a program and recognized the myriad partners and individuals involved in producing the “Fostering Informed Citizenship” event. Ms. Campbell also dedicated the evening’s proceedings to the memory of Cokie Roberts, the legendary journalist and longtime member of the Society’s Board of Trustees.

Soraya Gage, General Manager of NBC News Learn, then spoke on working with the Society to produce a series of videos concerning informed citizenship. These short films follow the USCHS *We the People Constitution Tour*, which educates D.C. public and charter school students on their government through a tour of D.C.’s iconic landscape. In these videos produced by NBC Learn, viewers follow a group of young people through the nation’s capital as they explore their government and Constitution. Teachers and students can access this learning tool through the USCHS website here: <https://uschs.org/educate/we-the-people-constitution-program/we-the-people-constitution-video/>.

White House Correspondent Kristen Welker introduced an expert panel that spoke on civic education in the classroom and the importance of encouraging civic engagement in our society. Ms. Alysha Butler of McKinley Technology High School – 2019 Gilder Lehrman National History Teacher of the Year – highlighted the importance of expanding “the narrative of our Constitution” to include minorities and other missing voices. Panelist Carroll Doherty of the Pew Research Center commented on the tension and excitement surrounding the 2020 election as an event that “has, for better or worse, engaged the American people.” Other panelists included Dr. Denver Brunsman of George Washington University and Dr. Tim

Haglund of the Ashbrook Center; their comments helped define what it means to be "We the People."

Ms. Campbell concluded the night by presenting panelists and moderator Kristen Welker with [ornaments](#) crafted from Capitol marble and thanked those that attended. Guests of the evening included Members of Congress and Congressional staff, representatives from the Architect of the Capitol, the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Children's Concierge, the National Archives and Records Administration, the National Park Service, Restaurants Association, USA Guided Tours, the White House Historical Association, the White House Visitor Center, and USCHS members.

C-SPAN was on hand to record the program. The link to their recording will be shared soon.

This event was made possible thanks to Comcast NBCUniversal.

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About the United States Capitol Historical Society:

The United States Capitol Historical Society, founded in 1962, is chartered by Congress to foster and increase an informed patriotism among the citizens in the study of this living memorial to the founders of this Nation and the continuing thread of principles as exemplified by their successors. The Society is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, tax-exempt, educational 501(c)3 organization. For more information visit www.uschs.org.