FAU Libraries to host Alexander Hamilton exhibition

By Dale M. King

Alexander Hamilton, one of the most influential figures in United States history, is the focus of a traveling exhibition that will arrive at Florida Atlantic University Jan. 4, and will be on campus through Feb. 15 at the Wimberly Library on FAU’s Boca Raton campus.

The exhibition, “Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America,” traces the historical figure’s rise in five short years from an orphaned, 15-year-old West Indies immigrant to George Washington’s wartime aide, and at age 32, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.

He was born Jan. 11, 1757 and died at age 47 on July 12, 1804, from wounds suffered in an infamous duel with Aaron Burr, the country’s third vice president.

The exhibition, which is free and open to the public, will be in FAU Libraries’ first floor gallery. The library will offer free programs in conjunction with the exhibition.

“We are delighted to have been selected as a site for this exhibition,” said Dr. William Miller, dean of University Libraries at FAU. “Alexander Hamilton was a fascinating figure in the early history of the United States, but most of us know too little about his contributions.”

“Looking again at the debate that took place when this country was founded should help 21st-century Americans better understand why the government, the courts, our banking system and our economy are organized the way they are. Hamilton’s pivotal role in providing a foundation for the complex society we live in today will be a revelation for many who view this exhibit.”

Among the items in the exhibition are photos of Hamilton and Burr, Hamilton’s personal letters and other ephemera, photos of a silver sugar bowl, wrought iron slave shackles, Hamilton-Burr dueling pistols, coins and a mourning ring which is a gold ring set with a lock of Hamilton’s hair.

This is FAU Libraries’ first major event in conjunction with the unveiling of its “The Spirit of America Collection of Colonial Imprints,” a major collection that will help scholars explore the details of the period after the Revolution, which were so crucial to the creation of our current system of government, said Miller.

Hamilton was a complex and controversial figure, a Revolutionary War patriot and soldier, financial and legal genius, and an ardent opponent of slavery. He was the chief architect of many of the financial, political and legal institutions familiar to Americans today.

Hamilton’s journalistic campaign, through the Federalist Papers, to convince the American people to ratify the Constitution, equals in importance of his creation of the Bank of the United States and the New York Stock Exchange, and his pioneering efforts in the area of constitutional law.


For more information, call the FAU Libraries at 561-297-2116.

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