

NEWS RELEASE

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**PHMC'S 32nd ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY CONFERENCE TO
INCLUDE DISCUSSION OF OBAMA ELECTION
*Historical Marker to Be Dedicated at Bethel AME Church in Carlisle***

Harrisburg – A discussion of the Obama presidential campaign and inauguration from the perspective of local news media and area eyewitnesses will be among the highlights of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's 32nd Annual Black History Conference, at 9:30 a.m. on May 9, at the YWCA Carlisle, 301 G St., in Carlisle.

Ron Martin, news anchor for WGAL-TV, Lancaster, and Joseph Sanks, a photojournalist for WGAL, will join Pastor Earl Harris of St. Paul's Church, Harrisburg, and Dickinson College student Yazmin Monet Watkins to share insights on the election and inauguration of the nation's first Black president.

"As the commonwealth's official history agency, we realize that Pennsylvania's heritage would be incomplete without the culture and accomplishments of our African American community," said Barbara Franco, PHMC executive director. "This conference is the perfect opportunity to reflect on the influence and importance of African Americans in American and Pennsylvanian history."

Other partner organizations in the conference include Pennsylvania Quest for Freedom, Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau, Cumberland County Historical Society, the Borough of Carlisle, Dickinson College and the Carlisle Theatre.

In addition to the educational panels, a Pennsylvania Historical Marker will be dedicated at 4 p.m. at the Bethel AME Church, 131 E. Pomfret St., Carlisle, one of the earliest African American churches (ca.1820) west of the Susquehanna River. The church was used as part of the

Underground Railroad and served as site of abolitionist activities.

Additional information about the conference is available at www.phmc.state.pa.us or by contacting Karen James, PHMC coordinator of African American programs, at kajames@state.pa.us or 717-783-9871.