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New Exhibit at Kean University Features the Life and Transformation of the Great American Newspaper

UNION, NJ — Kean University and Liberty Hall Museum have collaborated to mount a new exhibit, entitled *Headline News: The Life and Transformation of the Great American Newspaper*. The exhibit opens on September 10 and will feature newspapers from the Liberty Hall Museum collection spanning four centuries of American journalism.

Legendary journalist Pete Hamill wrote an introduction for the exhibit, which also features oral histories from several well-known journalists and audio excerpts from the work of some of journalism's giants, including Ida B. Wells, H.L. Mencken, Grantland Rice, Martha Gellhorn, and Ernie Pyle.

The exhibit, the third such collaboration between the University and the Museum since 2008, will be staged in the Karl and Helen Burger Gallery in Kean University's Maxine and Jack Lane Center for Academic Success. The show will feature dozens of famous headlines and front pages from American newspapers dating to 1789. Most of the newspapers were carefully saved by the Kean family over the last 200 years and were stored in Liberty Hall. Kean's Department of Communication and Liberty Hall Museum staff undertook the massive effort to cull the collection and research the significance of the artifacts.

"This show displays newspapers in their glorious heyday," said Hamill. "I hope the young look closely, and realize why they mattered so much."

Terry Golway, director of the John Kean Center for American History and a former journalist, and Pat Winters Lauro, assistant professor of journalism in the Communication Department, co-curated the show. William Schroh and Susan Garino of Liberty Hall Museum designed the exhibit.

"This exhibit attempts to show the importance of the newspaper in American democracy, culture and history," said Lauro. "Our collection shows how news – and what we consider news – has changed, but more importantly it is a visible demonstration of the mores of the day."

The exhibit features famous front pages reporting news of the assassinations of Presidents Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield and John F. Kennedy, the start of the Civil War, the end of World War I, the moon landing of 1969, the triumph of Nelson Mandela in South Africa, the first votes cast by women, and the election of Barack Obama. It includes pages from a variety of newspapers, many now extinct, such as New York's *Journal-American* and *Herald Tribune* as well as New Jersey's *Elizabeth Daily Journal* and the *Newark News*.

"We have artifacts from four centuries of news-gathering," Golway noted. The oldest artifact is a copy of the *Gazette of the United States* from 1789.

In conjunction with the exhibit, Kean University and Liberty Hall Museum are planning two panel discussions about newspapers, past and present, in early October. More details will be announced in early September. *Headline News* will be on display until late October.

Liberty Hall Museum at Kean University chronicles more than 200 years of American history. Built in 1772 by William Livingston, New Jersey's first elected governor, the Victorian style mansion is a treasure trove of historic riches. Along with forgotten letters from Thomas Jefferson, Liberty Hall also houses extensive collections of antique furniture, ceramics, textiles, toys and tools owned by seven generations of the Livingston and Kean families. The Firehouse is the latest addition to the Museum's complex housing two antique fire engines and a collection of fire memorabilia.

Liberty Hall is located at 1003 Morris Avenue in Union, New Jersey. It is open to the public Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and noon to 4 p.m. on Sundays. For more information or to make reservations, call (908) 527-0400, e-mail libertyhall@kean.edu or visit www.kean.edu/libertyhall.

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