



Media Contact:

Tanisha Morris

tanisha.morris@andbarr.co

[407-494-4919](tel:407-494-4919)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

History Center Celebrates Florida Highwaymen on May 6

Free Saturday event features legendary painters, children's art and activities

ORLANDO, Fla. (April 4, 2023) – Visitors to the [Orange County Regional History Center](#) on May 6 will have a special opportunity to meet Florida legends at “A Day with the Florida Highwaymen: Celebrating Art & Creativity,” a free event from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The day honors the group of 26 African American artists who broke from the conventions of the Jim Crow South in the 1950s and '60s to paint and sell their now-iconic landscapes of Florida. Most were from the Fort Pierce area.

“Our museum has had a special relationship with the Florida Highwaymen for more than 20 years,” said Pam Schwartz, the History Center’s executive director. “Chances are increasingly rare to talk with the original painters and purchase their art, and we’re thrilled to make the experience available for our members and guests.”

Three of the original Highwaymen painters – Curtis Arnett, Al Black, and Robert Lewis Jr. – are slated to participate May 6, along with second-generation painters Robert Lewis III and Roy McLendon Jr. The day’s events also include a talk by Dr. Renee Mills about the life and work of her mother, the late Mary Ann Carroll, the only woman among the Highwaymen artists and the History Center’s honoree at its annual Women’s History Month Breakfast in 2022.

Highwaymen paintings now can bring hefty prices and “are collected by people like Steven Spielberg, Michelle Obama, Jeb Bush and a small army of private collectors,” according to an “All Things Considered” report on NPR. But the artists’ success wasn’t always assured. In the 1970s and '80s, popular tastes had changed, and the painters found little demand for their work. But the 1990s brought a renaissance of interest that has not diminished, and the Highwaymen have become a storied part of Florida’s history and culture.

Art from the History Center’s Highwaymen Kids program will be on display at the museum on May 6, and visitors can participate in Florida Highwaymen-themed family activities from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Museum admission is free to the public for the day, and guests can enjoy the History Center’s four floors of exhibits and Highwaymen selections from its own collections as well.

The Orange County Regional History Center, housed in a historic courthouse at 65 E. Central Blvd. in downtown Orlando, features four floors of permanent and special exhibitions. The museum is a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It is funded in part by Orange County Government through the Community & Family Services Department under Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the Board of County Commissioners. The Historical Society of Central Florida Inc. is supported by United Arts of Central Florida and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. For more information, visit www.thehistorycenter.org.

###