

News for Immediate Release

March 12, 2013

Governor Corbett Proclaims Hannah Callowhill Penn Day in Honor of Women's History Month

Harrisburg – Governor Tom Corbett today honored Hannah Penn's legacy and contributions to the commonwealth by proclaiming "Hannah Callowhill Penn Day" across Pennsylvania.

As William Penn's second wife, Hannah Callowhill Penn played an important role in the development of Pennsylvania.

Raised to believe that men and women were created equal, Hanna Callowhill Penn ruled the Pennsylvania colony for six years after her husband was incapacitated by a stroke in 1712.

After William Penn died, she ruled for another eight years in her own name. She governed from England with the help of her agent, James Logan, who lived in Pennsylvania.

At that time, no other woman in Britain, aside from Queen Mary II and Queen Anne had held direct political power of this kind. Although Hannah managed Pennsylvania with the help of Logan, she had the final word on all decisions.

"Every day when I enter the governor's office, I am surrounded by the paintings of my predecessors, men such as William Penn and Thomas Mifflin." Corbett said.

“Hannah Penn’s portrait belongs there as well, so that our daughters and granddaughters can see clearly that even in an era when women lacked full rights, one of them led.”

“Hannah Callowhill Penn Day” also marks the beginning of a yearlong project to examine Hannah Penn’s legacy in Pennsylvania. First Lady Susan Corbett will lead a team that includes The Capitol Preservation Committee, State Museum of Pennsylvania, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Pennsbury Manor and the Pennsylvania Commission for Women and the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission.

The team will work together to feature a series of programs and events throughout the next year acknowledging the work of Hannah Callowhill Penn.

“Although she is not widely known and seems to have disappeared from our history books, it is time to give Hannah Penn her proper place in our commonwealth’s history,” Susan Corbett said, “What better way to commemorate Women’s History Month than to recognize the woman who first governed Pennsylvania.”

Her legacy will also be honored with the annual Hannah Penn Leadership Award to be administered by the Pennsylvania Commission for Women. The goal of the award is to inspire leadership among the women of Pennsylvania.

Gov. Corbett also announced that Hannah Callowhill Penn will be named posthumously a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania. The award recognizes women whose outstanding accomplishments through their professional careers and/or their volunteer service have

reflected honor on their community, the commonwealth and the nation.

In honor of Hannah Callowhill Penn, The State Museum of Pennsylvania has opened an exhibit entitled "Hannah Penn: blest with a strong judgment and excellent good sense." The exhibit features a unique collection of artifacts and items associated with Hannah and William Penn. It will be open through April 7, 2013.

For more information, visit www.pa.gov.

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Editor's Note: The full text of the proclamation follows:

PROCLAMATION

HANNAH CALLOWHILL PENN DAY

March 12, 2013

WHEREAS, in 1696 Hannah Callowhill Penn, a well-educated Quaker woman, married William Penn the founder of the English proprietary colony and province of Pennsylvania, and resided at Pennsbury Manor in Morrisville, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Hannah Callowhill Penn and William Penn made remarkable contributions to the proprietorship of Pennsylvania now known as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, one of the thirteen colonies that became the United States of America, and to the founding of our nation and the development of its guiding principles; and

WHEREAS, William Penn governed Pennsylvania until he was incapacitated by a stroke in 1712; and

WHEREAS, thereafter, Hannah Callowhill Penn effectively governed the colony of Pennsylvania in William Penn's name for six years until his death in 1718, and then continued to govern Pennsylvania in her own name from England with her agents in Pennsylvania for another eight years; and

WHEREAS, Hannah Callowhill Penn is believed to have exercised strong fiscal management of the colony of Pennsylvania, which was heavily in debt at the time of William Penn's death; and the colony through her actions became financially stable at the time of her death in 1726; and

WHEREAS, Hannah Callowhill Penn prevailed over challenges to her authority to govern and is remembered for her strong civic leadership and governance of Pennsylvania, especially her ability to lead, direct and delegate decision making, build political consensus among and incorporate the political advice of her advisors, and make sound judgments benefitting Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Hannah Callowhill Penn, the first woman to govern Pennsylvania over 300 years ago, serves today as a role model for women who desire to affect political change, overcome personal challenges and restrictive social codes of conduct and become leaders in our state, communities, schools and businesses and therefore, Hannah Callowhill Penn holds a special place of honor in the history of our Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Hannah Callowhill Penn also has been recognized posthumously for her accomplishments by President Ronald Reagan who issued a proclamation on November 28, 1984, granting Hannah Callowhill Penn (and William Penn) Honorary United States Citizenship, making her one of only seven people in U.S. history, and the first woman, to be granted that honor, and also by the Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives which issued a Concurrent Resolution on May 8, 1985 granting Hannah Callowhill Penn (and William Penn) honorary Pennsylvania Citizenship and which further, respectively issued Resolutions in June of 2011 recognizing the accomplishments of Hannah Callowhill Penn (and William Penn).

THEREFORE, I, Tom Corbett, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in special recognition of Hannah Callowhill Penn's legacy, accomplishments, and contributions to Pennsylvania, and in honor of the 300th anniversary of her service to Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim March 12, 2013 as HANNAH CALLOWHILL PENN DAY.

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