

THE  
**AUTOBIOGRAPHY**  
PROJECT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kim Rothwell  
Alta Communications  
215.790.7837  
[kim@alta247.com](mailto:kim@alta247.com)

**Six-Week, Region-Wide Writing Project Launches at 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station:  
The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and *One Book, One Philadelphia*  
Present *The Autobiography Project***

**Philadelphia – April 5, 2006** – The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary in partnership with *One Book, One Philadelphia* announce the launch of *The Autobiography Project*, a six-week, region-wide writing initiative which kicked off today and through May 17, 2006.

*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* is the most widely published autobiography of all time. Now, in honor of Franklin's 300th birthday, Philadelphians are invited to submit a memoir of their own using no more than 300 words. At the conclusion of the six-week citywide writing workshop, selected entries will be published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Daily News*, and on bus shelter posters throughout Philadelphia.

"Just as the *One Book, One Philadelphia* program gets Philadelphians reading, the aim of *The Autobiography Project* is to get us all writing," said Nicola Twilley, director of public programming, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary. "In his *Autobiography*, Franklin spends several pages describing how he taught himself to write well, saying 'Writing has been a great Use to me in the Course of my Life, and was a principal Means of my Advancement.' We hope that through this project, Philadelphians will experience and enjoy the process of self-reflection and self-expression Franklin found so valuable." Copies of *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* are available to borrow for free at all 54 branches of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

The project launched on Wednesday, April 5, at noon at Philadelphia's 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station. **James Srodes**, author of *Franklin: The Essential Founding Father* (a 2006 *One Book* pick), served as host for the event which included special appearances by guest autobiographers – composer, conductor and musician, **Peter Nero** and master chef, **Joseph Poon** – the official unveiling of the bus shelter poster design, giveaways, and information on how to participate.

Throughout the six-week writing period, participants can get writing support at free drop-in writing centers at Drexel University and Free Library of Philadelphia branches; online, with interactive feedback; or by attending a writing workshop. A list of workshops and drop-in center hours are available at [www.theautobiographyproject.com](http://www.theautobiographyproject.com). Organizations and institutions with a group of potential participants are invited to request a free writing workshop at their institution.

Entries will be judged by a selection panel made up of a diverse group of writers, many with teaching experience. Panelists include *Inquirer* staff writer, Paul Nussbaum; Director of the Greater Philadelphia Wordshop Studio, Alison Hicks; and Director of the Drexel University Writing Program, Harriet Levin Millan; Director of the Kelly Writers House at the University of Pennsylvania, Jennifer Snead; and retired English Department Head from the School District of Philadelphia, Mimi Barton.

*The Autobiography Project* is sponsored by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Daily News*, Philly.com, and SEPTA and is supported by Drexel University and the Greater Philadelphia Wordshop Studio.

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary, a non-profit organization supported by a lead grant of \$4 million from The Pew Charitable Trusts, was established to mark the 300-year anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth (1706-2006) with a celebration dedicated to educating the public about his enduring legacy and inspiring renewed appreciation of the values he embodied. The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary was founded in 2000 by a consortium of five Philadelphia cultural institutions: the American Philosophical Society, The Franklin Institute, The Library Company of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, an Act of Congress in 2002 created the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission, a panel of fifteen outstanding Americans chosen to study and recommend programs to celebrate Franklin's 300th birthday. The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary can be found online at [www.benfranklin300.org](http://www.benfranklin300.org).

The mission of *One Book, One Philadelphia* is to promote reading, literacy, library usage, and community-building throughout the Greater Philadelphia area. Independence Blue Cross is the lead sponsor of *One Book, One Philadelphia*. In 2006, *One Book* had over 300 sponsors and community partners that created programs in celebration of the Franklin Tercentenary. These included author lectures, book discussions, musical performances, museum exhibitions, and children's programs. *One Book* is a joint project of Mayor John F. Street and the Free Library of Philadelphia. For more information about this and other Library programs, visit [www.library.phila.gov](http://www.library.phila.gov).

# # #