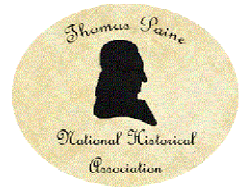




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For Immediate Release

IONA COLLEGE ESTABLISHES FIRST-EVER ACADEMIC INSTITUTE FOR THOMAS PAINE STUDIES

*Will Be Premier Academic Center in U.S. for the
Preservation, Study, and Dissemination of Paine's
Life-Story, Work, and Global Legacy*

NEW ROCHELLE, NY (July 23, 2013) Iona College announced today that it has established the Institute for Thomas Paine Studies (ITPS), the first Paine Studies program at an academic institution. The announcement follows the recent approval by the New York State Supreme Court of a petition by the Thomas Paine National Historical Association to transfer permanent custodianship of its Thomas Paine Collection to Iona.

Comprising some 300 varied items created from the late 18th to early 19th centuries, the Thomas Paine Collection is, like the man himself, of both national and international significance. Inspired by the bestowal of this collection, the Institute for Thomas Paine Studies was established to be the premier academic center for the preservation, study, and dissemination of Thomas Paine's life-story, work, and global legacy through stewardship of related archival material and development of educational programming. The establishment of this Institute creates an unprecedented academic affiliation for a long-neglected national treasure of American history and thought. This founding father, whose ideas have also incited debate and revolution around the world, was buried on his

property in New Rochelle, about a quarter of a mile from the Iona campus, until his remains were exhumed, taken to England in 1819, and then lost.

The ITPS will house one of the world's most unique Paine collections, including multiple first editions and early copies of his famous writings--*Common Sense*, *Age of Reason*, and *Rights of Man*. It also contains more than 100 texts, pamphlets, and letters written or published by Paine himself, as well as personal ephemera. This combination of Paine's writings and personal artifacts is one of the only places in the world one can see both at the same time.

"The establishment of this Institute creates a first-of-its-kind academic affiliation for a long-neglected yet influential founding intellect of our country," said Brian Nickerson, Ph.D., provost and principal founder of the Institute. "Paine's writings have and continue to influence the political, social, and economic debates of our era. One cannot understand the fundamental principles of democracy or the American experience without understanding Paine."

The genesis of the Institute traces back to 2009 when the Thomas Paine National Historical Association (TPNHA), founded in 1884, consulted with and chose Iona to partner with to preserve and develop its rich collection of writings and artifacts by and about Paine. TPNHA was represented by Daniel R. Alcott, Partner and Chair of the Not-for-Profit Department of Dorf & Nelson LLP with headquarters in Rye, NY. "Our firm was honored to represent this important organization for so many years and to finally see come to fruition the efforts of so many people, including those in the Office of the Attorney General of the State of New York," said Alcott. "Of course, the TPNHA Board of Directors deserves much of the credit as they worked tirelessly, as volunteers over a period of several years, with a singular focus of helping this organization rise from ashes to fulfill its mission and ensuring that this collection can be properly maintained and made available to the public while remaining in New Rochelle. They have built an outstanding relationship with Provost Brian J. Nickerson, PhD., and Iona College, an important institution of higher learning that will be able to expand the

mission of bringing the writings and teachings of Thomas Paine to students and scholars in the United States and throughout the world.”

Dr. Nickerson noted, “Even when the collection was available, TPNHA was frustrated by a lack of programming opportunities with colleges or universities. Through the development of lectures, seminars, conferences, specific courses, and new curricula using Paine primary materials, the Institute is breathing new life into the Paine archives.” Iona plans to renew the TPNHA’s tradition of public programs and greatly enhance academic awareness and use of the collection.

Commenting on the importance of the Collection and Paine himself, Brad Mulkern from TPNHA stated: “Paine is a pre-eminent founder of this country and the key political philosopher of the age of democratic revolutions. This Collection has the only personal effects of Paine that have survived the ages, a vast array of historical documents surrounding Paine, and a broad representation of his writings.”

Brad continued: “Our Association's mission is to educate the world about Thomas Paine. Helping to develop curricula and scholarship around our collection goes a long way in fulfilling our mission.”

The material in this collection was accrued by the TPNHA over the century of its existence and housed in a safe within the Association’s headquarters at the Thomas Paine Museum in New Rochelle, NY. The collection was transferred from the Paine Museum and from the New York Historical Society, where some material was on loan, to the archive of Ryan Library.

Since it began stewarding the archives, Iona College has been active in creating academic programming including a recently announced interdisciplinary minor in Thomas Paine Studies, opportunities for student internships in the archive, and the publication of proceedings from the International Conference of Thomas Paine Studies held at the college in October 2012. In addition, two special projects are currently in underway: a Thomas Paine Encyclopedia app, to be

available for free download on iTunes, and a text analysis project, recently the recipient of a \$25,000 grant from the James Hervey Johnson Charitable Educational Trust, that is confronting the difficult issue of ascertaining Paine's authorship of various anonymous or unattributed works. "The Institute offers faculty an unprecedented opportunity to do multidisciplinary research and develop whole courses or individual classes around the archive. For students, we hope to offer insight into Paine's ideological impact on American history as well as materials for papers, projects, and honors senior theses," said Dr. Scott Cleary, faculty director of the Institute.

More information about the Thomas Paine Collection at the Ryan Library including requests to view the current exhibition on the second floor as well as a guide to the key items on display can be obtained by visiting www.iona.edu/library.

For more information on the ITPS and its programs for students, scholars and the general public, please visit: www.thomaspainestudies.org

Founded in 1940, Iona College is a four-year private, co-educational institution of learning in the tradition of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers and American Catholic higher education. It is a diverse community of learners and scholars dedicated to academic excellence and the values of justice, peace and service. Iona offers undergraduate degrees in liberal arts, science, and business administration, as well as Master of Arts, Master of Science and Master of Business Administration degrees and numerous advanced certificate programs.