

**FROM: Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.**

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

**EVENT PHOTOS AND VIDEO**

**STATUE OF LIBERTY MUSEUM OPENS TO THE PUBLIC**

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**NEW YORK CITY MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO, DIANE VON FURSTENBERG  
PARTICIPATE IN DEDICATION CEREMONY FOR THE  
STATUE OF LIBERTY MUSEUM ON LIBERTY ISLAND**

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*Museum Celebrates the Statue of Liberty's History, Influence, and Legacy in the World  
and Features the Statue's Original Torch*

May 16, 2019 (New York, NY) -- The Statue of Liberty Museum on Liberty Island opened to the public today following a dedication ceremony presented by The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. and the National Park Service. New York City Mayor **Bill de Blasio**, The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation Chairman of the Board **Albert Bellas** and President and CEO **Stephen Briganti**, as well as campaign chairperson **Diane von Furstenberg** delivered remarks at the ceremony, which also included performances from Broadway stars and the Manhattan Girls Chorus.

"America needs this museum and what it represents now more than ever. Immigration defines us, and New York is the ultimate city of immigrants. The Statue of Liberty represents our core values – we embrace diversity, support our neighbors, and believe everyone should have a fair shot to live the American dream," said **Mayor de Blasio**.

"Today, we share in the American people's gratitude for this remarkable contribution to the legacy of the Statue of Liberty, and for ensuring her story will continue to be told to this and future generations," said Superintendent of the Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island **John Piltzecker**.

"Starting today, every visitor who comes to Liberty Island will have the opportunity to have a full museum experience, to learn about Lady Liberty's history and how She still shines as a beacon of hope for all people around the world," said **Stephen Briganti**.

The 26,000 square foot museum features three gallery spaces, each one meant to inspire visitors and educate them about the Statue of Liberty in interactive and thought-provoking ways. The experience culminates with an up-close view of Liberty's most iconic symbol, her original torch, held high for nearly 100 years. Rescued from the elements and replaced in 1986, the torch is the most powerful artifact visitors encounter as they reach the end of the museum experience. The museum merges landscape and building, and the roof is planted with native meadow grasses and offers visitors

sweeping, panoramic views of Lady Liberty, lower Manhattan, and all of New York Harbor. Access to the museum is free with the purchase of a Statue Cruises ferry ticket to Liberty and Ellis Islands.

The new museum is part of a \$100 million Liberty Island-wide beautification effort that's being funded by The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation. The museum was designed by architecture firm FXCollaborative with exhibits created by experience design firm ESI Design. The structure was built by Phelps Construction Group. SBI Consultants served as the owner's representative coordinating activities among all stakeholders.

"While the Statue of Liberty is one of the most recognizable icons in the world, few people ever get to climb to its crown or get to see Lady Liberty's face up close," said **Edwin Schlossberg**, Founder and Principal Designer of ESI Design. "Our goal for the design of the museum experience is to immerse visitors in not just the grandeur and sweeping history of the Statue, but also in the very idea of liberty itself so that they leave with a deeper understanding of what it means to them and the active role required to uphold it."

"From the start, the Statue of Liberty Museum was conceived as a garden pavilion that would create a joyous and welcoming new experience for all visitors to the island, regardless of age, nationality, or ethnicity," said **Nicholas Garrison**, Design Partner and Project Director at FXCollaborative.

"Engaging the park's formal plan, and in response to its spectacular setting, the island's landscape is lifted and merged with the architecture to create memorable public space above, and in the Museum space below in a new geology. The building's angular forms and spaces are shaped by its views and the irregularity of the water's edge, celebrating liberty."

"Building a museum on an island presented some challenges, but we could not be any prouder of this new museum we have built," said **Douglas Phelps**, President of Phelps Construction Group. "We are honored to have been given the opportunity by the Foundation to build this museum for not only our country, but the entire world to enjoy and learn what liberty means to them."

The dedication also featured live performances from Broadway stars **Laura Osnes**, **Lilli Cooper**, and **Javier Muñoz** who sang iconic songs written by Irving Berlin including "God Bless America," "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor," and a medley of "Shaking the Blues Away" and "Blue Skies" to celebrate the opening of the new museum. The Manhattan Girls Chorus also performed.

Liberty Mutual Insurance is the lead corporate sponsor. Liberty Star Club donors include Allen & Company, American Express, Anonymous, Apply, The Bezos Family, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Charles Cahn Family, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Chanel, Inc., The Coca-Cola Foundation, Comcast NBCUniversal, The James and Judith Dimon Foundation, Michael and Linda Donovan, Massimo Ferragamo, The Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation, David Geffen Foundation, Jeffrey and Paula Gural, The Hess Family, Judy and Peter Blum Kovler Foundation, The Lauder Foundation, The Ralph and Ricky Lauren Family Foundation, Melody Hobson and George Lucas, Mr. Frank McCourt, Deborah Simon, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, The Tisch Family, and The Walt Disney Company. Additional major donors include the Annenberg Foundation, Ford Foundation, Charina Endowment Fund, and the NYC & Company Foundation.

For more information about the Statue of Liberty Museum or visiting Liberty Island go to [statueoflibertymuseum.org](http://statueoflibertymuseum.org) and follow the Foundation on social media at [Facebook.com/StatueEllisFdn](https://www.facebook.com/StatueEllisFdn), Twitter [@StatueEllisFdn](https://twitter.com/StatueEllisFdn), and Instagram [@StatueEllisFdn](https://www.instagram.com/StatueEllisFdn).

**ABOUT THE STATUE OF LIBERTY-ELLIS ISLAND FOUNDATION, INC.**

The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization established in 1982 to raise funds for and oversee the historic restoration and preservation of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. For more than 35 years the Foundation has collaborated with the U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service in what has become one of the most successful public-private partnership in U.S. history, having raised hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition to restoring the monuments, the Foundation created museums on both islands, The American Immigrant Wall of Honor®, the American Family Immigration History Center® and The Peopling of America Center®, which in 2015 transformed the museum on Ellis Island into the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration. The Foundation oversaw the fundraising and construction of the new Statue of Liberty Museum which opened in May 2019. The organization's endowment has funded over 200 projects that support these national treasures.