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February 5, 2015

New Delaware Historical Society Film Series to Document the Stories of Prominent African-American Leaders in Delaware

Voices of the Elders: Stories of African Americans in Delaware documentary film series debuts with story of Dr. Joseph E. Johnson

Wilmington, DE — The introductory film in the *Voices of the Elders: Stories of African Americans in Delaware* series will make its debut on February 12, 2015 at 6 pm in the Christopher Ward Reading Room of the Delaware Historical Society's Research Library.

A project of the Delaware Historical Society's Center for African American Heritage, the *Voices of the Elders* documents African-American leaders in Delaware. Throughout 2015, a new figure will be highlighted in a documentary to be screened at the Society. February's film will feature the life and career of Dr. Joseph E. Johnson with the film *Dr. Joseph Johnson: African American Educator*. Future interview subjects will include Dr. Lozelle Deluz, Canon Lloyd S. Casson, James Gilliam, Sr., George Wright, Jr. and Esthelda Parker Selby.

Dr. Johnson's career in public school administration began at Warner Junior High School in Wilmington. In 1968, he became principal of P.S. DuPont High School—the first African-American principal of a non-segregated institution. He was the last superintendent of the Wilmington Public Schools and then the first superintendent of the Red Clay School District, where he remained until his retirement in 1990.

As a school administrator, Dr. Johnson advocated for equal access to quality education for all students during the desegregation of Delaware's public schools. He consulted on the *Evans vs. Buchanan* case as well subsequent federal efforts to desegregate public schools. He worked closely with civil rights lawyer Louis L. Redding and Judge Leonard Williams to address issues of educational disparity in Delaware.

In addition to his civil rights work in the educational system, Dr. Johnson has been an invaluable part of Wilmington's community. He has served on the boards of the Walnut Street YMCA, the Delaware Historical Society and the Delaware Humanities Council. Currently, Dr. Johnson is president of the Redding House Foundation, which aims to preserve and continue Louis L. Redding's legacy. In 2014, Dr. Johnson was honored with the Delaware

Barristers' Association's "Excellence in Education Award." He is also an active member of the Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew.

Reservations for the program can be made by calling (302) 655-7161 or deinfo@dehistory.org.

Free parking provided by Colonial parking in the [6th and Shipley St. lot](#).

The Delaware Historical Society owns and operates the Delaware History Museum; a nationally recognized Research Library; Old Town Hall; Willingtown Square, four 18th-century houses surrounding a picturesque urban courtyard located in Wilmington; as well as the Read House & Gardens located in historic New Castle, recognized as an "American Treasure" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service; and The Center for African American Heritage, which will be included as part of the expansion of the Delaware History Museum, expected to reopen in 2016.

For more information on the Delaware Historical Society, call (302) 655-7161 or visit www.dehistory.org.

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