



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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William H. Johnson Forever Stamp Available Today



To obtain a high-resolution image of this stamp for media use only, email leisha.i.palmore-drummond@usps.gov

BALTIMORE, MD — The United States Postal Service today issued a new commemorative Forever stamp honoring one of America's foremost African-American artists, William H. Johnson. The 11th issuance in the American Treasures series showcases a still life painting by Johnson. *Flowers*, an oil-on-plywood painting dated 1939–1940, depicts a vase of boldly rendered, brightly colored blooms on a small red table.

"A new generation has discovered Johnson's work and today he's regarded as a major figure in 20th century art," said Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman. "A foundation named for him offers assistance to African-American artists early in their careers, so we're especially proud to help spread appreciation for his work. This colorful stamp may even help inspire a gifted young person to also pursue a life in the arts."

Joining Stroman to dedicate the stamp were Dr. David Wilson, president, Morgan State University; Dr. Leslie King-Hammond, graduate dean emerita/founding director, Center for Race and Culture; S. Marquette Folley, project director, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service; and Marcellus

Shepard, master of ceremonies, WEAA-FM 88.9.

The event took place at the Murphy Fine Arts Center – Gilliam Concert Hall on the campus of Morgan State University.

In 1926, Johnson went to France to study modernism. The two-dimensional, consciously “naïve” style in which *Flowers* was painted was one of the many techniques of modernist abstraction and “primitive” art adapted by Johnson. He returned briefly to New York in 1929 and set up a studio in Harlem. The following year, he received the gold medal for distinguished achievement in fine arts from the William E. Harmon Foundation. The painting, a gift of the Harmon Foundation, belongs to the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Rare paintings from the exhibition “William H. Johnson: An American Modern” by the artist and from the collection of the James E. Lewis Museum at Morgan State University, will be on view at the Lewis museum from April 7 until July 1. Developed by Morgan State University and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, the exhibition will continue on a 10-city tour through 2014. The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Henry Luce Foundation and Morgan State University Foundation, Inc. For more information, visit www.sites.si.edu

The William H. Johnson stamp is being issued as a Forever stamp in self-adhesive sheets of 20. Forever stamps are always equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce rate. The William H. Johnson stamps are being sold at a price of 45 cents each, or \$9 per sheet, and are available nationwide today.

Customers may view the William H. Johnson Forever Stamp, as well as many of this year’s other stamps, on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), through *Twitter* [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheparf.com/stamp-releases/2012. *Beyond the Perf* is the Postal Service’s online site for background on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark, William H. Johnson Forever Stamp

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at www.usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-782-6724. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

William H. Johnson Stamp
Main Post Office
900 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21233-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by June 11, 2012.

How to Order First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly “USA Philatelic” catalog, online at www.usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are four philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 468961, First Day Cover, \$0.89.
- 468965, Digital Color Postmark, \$1.60.
- 468991, Ceremony Program, \$6.95.
- 468999, Cancellation Keepsake (DCP w/Pane), \$10.95.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service was ranked number one in overall service performance, out of the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world, by Oxford Strategic Consulting. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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