



## LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

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### **Piedmont Blues Legend John Cephas Honored as 2009 African American Trailblazers with Song and Ceremony**

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**For Immediate Release**

(Richmond, Va) – John Cephas, celebrated Piedmont Blues artist, is the focus of several tribute programs sponsored by the River City Blues Society and the Library of Virginia. Cephas is being honored by both groups this February as a part of the Library's 2009 **African American Trailblazers in Virginia History** program.

On February 25, 2009, the River City Blues Society and the Library of Virginia will sponsor a special tribute concert, "**Piedmont Blues with Wiggins and Friends: A Tribute to John Cephas,**" at the Capital Ale House Downtown Music Hall. Phil Wiggins, a long-time recording and performing partner of Cephas, will be joined by other notable blues players Rick Franklin and Mike Baytop to honor Cephas and the Piedmont Blues tradition. Gregg Kimball, local traditional blues guitarist and educator, will open the show at 6:00 PM. Tickets are \$5.00. Visit <http://wegotblues.com> for more details.

The following afternoon, on February 26, 2009, Wiggins and Friends will perform two special programs celebrating John Cephas' legacy at the **Maggie L. Walker Governor's School**. The event is part of the **River City Blues Society's "Blues in the Schools" initiative** and is being co-sponsored by the Library of Virginia.

On February 26, 2009, Cephas will be acknowledged for his contributions in the area of musical arts at the **Library of Virginia's African American History Month reception**. Music will be provided by an ensemble of Piedmont blues musicians and vocalists. The program will take place from 6:00 to 8:00 PM and is free to the public. Seating is limited, so please call 804-692-3900 for reservations.

Also honored with John Cephas as part of the **2009 African American Trailblazers in Virginia History** program are: *Dangerfield Newby* (1820–1859), Culpeper Co., member of John Brown's raiding party; *Amaza Lee Meredith* (1895–1984), Lynchburg and Petersburg, architect; *Oliver White Hill* (1907–2007), Richmond, attorney and civil rights leader; *Edna Lewis* (1916–2006), Orange County, chef and author; *Evelyn Thomas Butts* (1924–1993), Norfolk, principal in case to invalidate the poll tax; *Claudia Alexander Whitworth* (born 1927), Roanoke, newspaper publisher and humanitarian; and *Leland Melvin* (born 1964), Lynchburg, astronaut.

**-More-**

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To learn more about these individuals and to explore educational resources about their lives, visit our Web site at <http://www.lva.virginia.gov/trailblazers/>.

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**River City Blues Society** is organized exclusively for educational, literary, artistic and charitable purposes. We are a non-profit, volunteer-based organization dedicated to the promotion, preservation, and perpetuation of the Blues as an original American art form. For more information, visit <http://wegotblues.com>. The Blues in the Schools program is under affiliation of the Blues Foundation and is made possible by grants from the Blues Music Association and The Richmond Forum.

**The Library of Virginia**, located in historic downtown Richmond, holds the world's most extensive collection of material about the Old Dominion and has been a steward of the commonwealth's documentary and printed heritage since 1823. The story of Virginia and Virginians has been told in many ways since 1607. At the Library of Virginia it is told through more than 107 million manuscripts and more than 1.8 million books, serials, bound periodicals, microfilm reels, newspapers and state and federal documents, each an individual tile in the vast and colorful mosaic of Virginia's experience.