**SEASON FIVE OF “FINDING YOUR ROOTS**

**WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.”**  **PREMIERES WINTER 2019 ON PBS, BEGINNING JANUARY 8**

*10 All-New Episodes Explore Ancestry Stories of*

*Felicity Huffman, Andy Samberg, George R.R. Martin, Christiane Amanpour, Michael Strahan,*

*Laura Linney, Paul Ryan, Joe Madison, Michael Moore, Sarah Silverman, Kal Penn,*

*Michael K. Williams, Tig Notaro, Lisa Ling, Alejandro Innaritu, Chloe Sevigny and More*

BEVERLY HILLS, CA (July 31, 2018) — Today’s brightest personalities discover the surprising stories buried within their own families in the fifth season of the critically acclaimed PBS series **FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.** The new ten-episode season will premiere on Tuesdays, beginning January 8, 2019 at 8:00 p.m. ET (check local listings) on PBS.

This season features an array of celebrated guests who are cultural trailblazers with fascinating family stories, including Academy Award winner **Marisa Tomei**; Emmy and Golden Globe Award winners **Felicity Huffman**, **Laura Linney** and **S. Epatha Merkerson**; and actors **Michael K. Williams, Andy Samberg, Chloe Sevigny** and **Kal Penn**. Season Five also includes superstar author **George R.R. Martin**; acclaimed journalists **Christiane Amanpour, Ann Curry, Joe Madison** and **Lisa Ling**; bestselling author and Facebook executive **Sheryl Sandberg**; TV hosts **Seth Meyers** and **Michael Strahan**; artists **Marina Abramovic** and **Kehinde Wiley**; politicians **Marco Rubio, Tulsi Gabbard** and **Paul Ryan**; Academy Award-winning filmmakers **Alejandro Innaritu** and **Michael Moore**; and comedians **Tig Notaro** and **Sarah Silverman**.

The roots of these guests cover the globe — from Samoa, Nigeria, Taiwan and Sicily to Iran, Ireland, India and Cuba — and almost everywhere in between. Their family trees are filled with compelling characters — slaves and kings, artists and entrepreneurs, abandoned children and missing parents, revolutionaries, soldiers, and a constant flow of ordinary individuals who did remarkable things, laying the groundwork for their successful descendants. Each episode weaves together these stories, gleaned from cutting-edge DNA analysis and old school genealogical detective work. Highlights include a search for **Andy Samberg’s** biological grandparents, the discovery of **Michael Strahan’s** deep European ancestry and the solution to a mystery that has plagued **Ann Curry’s** family for her entire life.

At the center of it all, guiding every discovery, is host and executive producer Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor at Harvard University and director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research. “I find it inspiring that our fellow Americans are so determined to explore their own ancestral heritage,” said Gates, “precisely at a time when immigration has become such a deeply controversial and sensitive matter. Our series demonstrates each week, in vivid detail and with moving storytelling, that a continuing source of strength for our country is the fact that we are a nation of immigrants. That we can serve as both guide and inspiration to the splendidly exciting pleasure of finding one’s roots is an immense honor.  I believe that the more each of us understands about where we came from, about what our ancestors experienced, and how those experiences have shaped us, whether we knew about them or not, the more richly we can live our lives.”

In a very personal episode, the new season also explores Gates’ own DNA story and takes a look at how science and history can inspire the next generation. Concerned about the lack of diversity in STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), Gates worked with Penn State professor Nina Jablonski and a committed group of historians, artists, biologists, geneticists, anthropologists, genealogists and educators to develop the “Finding Your Roots Genetics & Genealogy Curriculum,” an educational model that invited students to consider who they are genetically, geologically/socio-culturally and intentionally. Once designed, the team piloted the curriculum in a two-week camp environment at two different locations in the U.S., where students developed hypotheses and research protocols. The [project video](http://stemforall2018.videohall.com/presentations/1184) won Facilitator’s Choice and Viewer’s Choice awards at the [2018 STEM For All Video Showcase](http://stemforall2018.videohall.com/presentations/1184), receiving tens of thousands of unique visitors from 154 countries.

Assembling the extensive family trees and family narratives alongside Dr. Gates are DNA expert **CeCe Moore** (Founder, The DNA Detective) and expert genealogist **Johni Cerny** (Founder, Lineages).

**FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR., Season Five** premieres onTuesdays, beginning Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 8:00 p.m. ET with an episode featuring Andy Samberg and George R.R. Martin, and the season continues into Spring 2019.  Season Five includes the following episodes:

* **“The Stories Encoded In Our DNA”** with Andy Samberg and George R.R. Martin
* **“Mystery Men”** with Michael K. Williams and Felicity Huffman
* **“Truth Tellers”** with Christiane Amanpour, Ann Curry and Lisa Ling
* **“Dreaming of a New Land (Between Worlds)**” with Sheryl Sandberg, Kal Penn and Marisa Tomei
* **“Freedom Tales”** with S. Epatha Merkerson and Michael Strahan
* **“Into The Wild”** with Laura Linney, Michael Moore and Chloe Sevigny
* **“Roots in Politics”** with Tulsi Gabbard, Marco Rubio and Paul Ryan
* **“The Eye of the Beholder”** with Marina Abramovic, Alejandro Innaritu and Kehinde Wiley
* **“No Laughing Matter”** with Tig Notaro, Seth Meyers and Sarah Silverman
* **“All in the Family”** with Joe Madison, Dr. Gates’ personal DNA story and “The Finding Your Roots: The Seedlings” STEM Camp

In conjunction with the broadcast, co-producer WETA, the flagship public broadcaster in the nation’s capital, will work with stations across the country to encourage viewers to explore and share their family histories via social media using the hashtag #FindingYourRoots on Facebook and Twitter, via [*Facebook.com/FindingYourRootsPBS*](https://www.facebook.com/FindingYourRootsPBS) and @HenryLouisGates, and on the series companion site, [*pbs.org/FindingYourRoots*](http://www.pbs.org/weta/finding-your-roots/).

**FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.,Season Five**is a production of McGee Media, Inkwell Films, Kunhardt Films and WETA Washington, D.C., in association with Ark Media. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is the writer, host, and executive producer. Dyllan McGee and Peter Kunhardt are executive producers. Dalton Delan and Anne Harrington are executive producers in charge for WETA. Bill Gardner is the executive in charge for PBS. Sabin Streeter of Ark Media is the senior producer. Hannah Olson is the series producer. Hazel Gurland-Pooler and Sabin Streeter are directors. Major corporate support for **FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.*,*Season Five**is provided by Ancestry, Johnson & Johnson and AT&T. Major support is also provided by the Ford Foundation, Candace King Weir, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS.

An electronic press kit for **FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.,Season Five**, including downloadable photos for promotional use, is available on [PBS Pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/Programs/f/Finding-Your-Roots).

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**About WETA**

WETA Washington, D.C., is one of the largest producing stations of new content for public television in the United States. WETA productions and co-productions include PBS NewsHour, Washington Week, The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize, THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS GERSHWIN PRIZE FOR POPULAR SONG, Latino Americans, The Italian Americans and documentaries by filmmaker Ken Burns and scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Sharon Percy Rockefeller is president and CEO. More information on WETA and its programs and services is available at [*www.weta.org*](http://www.weta.org).

**About McGee Media**

McGee Media was founded by award-winning filmmaker Dyllan McGee to produce documentary content that is innovative, compelling, and immersive. Every story is born from a vision of a more fair and equitable world. Whether it is the sweeping history of the African-American experience, or the intimate personal stories of the hundreds of women who made up the feminist movement, McGee Media uses television, film, and digital media in radical new ways to inform and inspire. Recent projects include AFRICA’S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS (PBS), MAKERS (Oath), FINDING YOUR ROOTS Seasons 1-5 (PBS), ONCE & FOR ALL (AOL), FIRST IN HUMAN (Discovery), and RANCHER, FARMER, FISHERMAN (Discovery).

**About Kunhardt Films**

Kunhardt Films specializes in documentary programming about the people and ideas that shape American history. Most recently completed is the personal film Becoming Warren Buffett(HBO, 2017). Past productions include the Primetime Emmy and Sundance Film Festival Audience Award winner Jim: The James Foley Story. Other films include Emmy Award-nominated Living with Lincoln (HBO) andEmmy Award-Nominated Nixon By Nixon: In His Own Words (HBO, 2014); Finding Your Roots Season 2 with Henry Louis Gates Jr; Makers: Women Who Make America (PBS & AOL, Season 2); The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross (PBS, 6 hours, winner of the Emmy Award, Peabody Award and duPont-Columbia Award); Gloria: In Her Own Words (HBO, 2011); Finding Your Roots (PBS, 10-hours, 2010); This Emotional Life (PBS, 6-hours, 2010), and two seasons of African American Livesfor PBS. Kunhardt Films was founded in 1987 as Kunhardt Productions. It is run by Peter Kunhardt and his sons Teddy and George.

**About Inkwell Films**

Inkwell Films was founded by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. to produce sophisticated documentary films about the African and African-American experience for a broad audience. The six-part PBS documentary series The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross (2013) earned the 2013 Peabody Award and NAACP Image Award. Inkwell Films has co-produced Finding Your Roots (Seasons 1-5), AFRICA’S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS (2017), BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK; AND STILL I RISE (2016), Black in Latin America (2011), Faces of America (2010), Looking for Lincoln (2009), African American Lives 2 (2008), Oprah’s Roots (2007) and African American Lives (2006).

**About Ark Media**

Barak Goodman and Rachel Dretzin founded Ark Media in 1996, and were joined by partner John Maggio in 2003. Together, Goodman, Dretzin, and Maggio have grown Ark into a leading producer of non-fiction series, theatrical documentaries, and television specials on a wide variety of subjects, along the way nurturing a diverse roster of passionate and talented filmmakers. Ark’s films have been honored with four national primetime Emmy Awards, an Academy Award nomination, multiple Writers Guild Awards, two duPont Columbia batons and three George H. Foster Peabody Awards, among many other awards and accolades. Coming soon: the feature documentary adaptation of Andrew Solomon’s monumental nonfiction book, Far From the Tree, in partnership with Participant Media; an American Experience film about Teddy Roosevelt’s fateful journey down an unknown Amazonian river in 1914, which almost cost him his life; a film for MSNBC about the press during the civil rights era; and a four-part series about genetics, based on Siddhartha Mukherjee’s best-seller *The Gene: An Intimate History*.

**PRESS CONTACT:**

Lauren Felsenstein, Tel.: 212-774-6162; [FindingYourRoots@id-pr.com](mailto:FindingYourRoots@id-pr.com)