FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 02/12/2016
Contacts: Craig Waters (850) 414-7641

Magna Carta Traveling Exhibit Opens at Florida Supreme Court Monday, February 15

TALLAHASSEE – A traveling exhibit celebrating the Magna Carta and the role it has played for 800 years in establishing and buttressing the concept of freedom under law will be hosted at the Florida Supreme Court from Feb. 15 through Feb. 26.

“Magna Carta: Enduring Legacy 1215-2015” is designed to raise public awareness of the significance of the document cherished by many American lawyers, judges, and historians as a central symbol of the rule of law that loomed very large in the minds of the leaders who founded the United States – and is still very much alive in courtrooms today.

“We were thrilled at the opportunity to host this wonderful exhibit,” Florida Chief Justice Jorge Labarga said Friday. “It’s our hope that many people are able to visit the Court and reflect on the relevance of the ‘Great Charter’ to the rights and liberties we cherish as Americans and are determined to pass on to future generations.”


The display is open to the public during business hours from 8:00 to 5:00. The public can also visit the Supreme Court’s library, where the rare book room collection includes an original 1669 edition of Coke’s Institutes. The rare book room also has on display a 1597 Spanish law book, which would have been used during Florida’s first Spanish period (1513-1763), and material from the Nuremberg trials in Germany, where Florida Supreme Court Justice Harold “Tom”
Sebring served on the Nazi War Crimes Tribunal from the fall of 1946 through the summer of 1947.

In the Magna Carta exhibit, another banner depicts a 14th century manuscript that quotes Chapter 29 of the Magna Carta, a justly famous provision that safeguards an individual’s right to life, liberty and property against illegal action.

The traveling exhibit was organized as part of the world-wide observations held to mark the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, signed by England’s King John in 1215. It is a collaboration of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Law Library of Congress and the Law Library of Congress.

The exhibit features freestanding banners depicting medieval manuscripts, books and other artifacts in an exhibition at the Library of Congress tracing the influence of the Magna Carta beginning with King John and the English barons at Runnymead Meadow, where the “Great Charter” was signed eight centuries ago. The exhibit curator at the Library of Congress provides detailed information about selected books and documents in a companion video.

The exhibit began its travels in 2014 at the ABA’s annual meeting in Boston. It has been seen in courthouses, law schools, universities and public libraries around the nation.

The exhibit will be in the rotunda of the Florida Supreme Court, which is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

###
Although in many ways Magna Carta belongs to the medieval society that created it, some of the most important people in our constitutional history have found in it an ancient precedent for the marriage of individual rights and constitutional government that has characterized the rise of the modern world.

Magna Carta is the charter of liberties that England’s King John granted to his barons in 1215. In the centuries since its creation, Magna Carta has become one of the most enduring symbols of liberty and the rule of law. Magna Carta is often cited as one of the founding documents of modern democracy and constitutional government. It is seen as a forerunner of such important sources of the British Constitution as the Petition of Right (1628), Habeas Corpus Act (1679), and English Bill of Rights (1689).

The document also had a profound effect on American colonists. The founders of the United States looked to it as a major influence in the creation of the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, and Bill of Rights.

Magna Carta’s admirers have seen in it the origin of many enduring constitutional principles: the rule of law, the right to a jury trial, the right to a speedy trial, freedom from unlawful imprisonment, protections from unlawful seizure of property, the theory of representative government, the principle of “no taxation without representation,” and most importantly, the concept of fundamental law—a law that not even the sovereign can alter.

Enduring Legacy
1215-2015

The ABA Standing Committee on the Law Library of Congress was created in 1932 to serve as the Association’s voice concerning the continued development, enhancement, and operation of the Law Library of Congress. Working in collaboration with the Law Librarian and other interested parties, the Standing Committee facilitates efforts to increase funding for the Law Library as well as to increase Law Library visibility through educational and scholarly programs of special interest to the legal community.

ambar.org/lawlibrary

Law Library of Congress

The Law Library of Congress was created by statute in 1832 to provide the United States government with a comprehensive collection of law resources for legal research. It now contains the largest collection of law books and resources in the world. Its collection of rare books documents the history of the Western legal heritage in approximately 60,000 volumes, dating from as early as the twelfth century.

Today the Law Library provides specialized research services to the United States Congress and other branches of the federal government, and reference services to the legal community, professional researchers, and the general public.

law.gov
In commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the granting of Magna Carta, the Library of Congress is presenting the exhibition *Magna Carta: Muse and Mentor* from November 6, 2014, to January 19, 2015. At the heart of the exhibition will be Lincoln Cathedral’s magnificent 1215 manuscript of King John’s Magna Carta—one of only four surviving original exemplifications from 1215.

To raise awareness about Magna Carta’s enduring legacy and to complement the Library’s onsite exhibition, the American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Law Library of Congress to develop the traveling exhibition, *Magna Carta: Enduring Legacy 1215–2015*. The exhibition shares images of objects from Library of Congress collections that illustrate Magna Carta’s influence throughout the centuries and explain the document’s long history.

**Support the Traveling Exhibition**
Your donation will help ensure widespread access by communities across the country. Visit donate.americanbar.org/mcexhibit.

**Bring the Traveling Exhibition to Your Community**
For information, please contact the Standing Committee at LawLibrary@americanbar.org or 202-662-1691.

**Follow the Traveling Exhibition on Facebook**
“Like” us at Facebook.com/ABAMagnaCarta.

**Visit Us Online**
View the Traveling Exhibition, including the companion video, at ambar.org/mctravelingexhibit.

The American Bar Association dedicated this Memorial to Magna Carta at Runnymede, England, in 1957. In June 2015, the ABA will be participating in a rededication of the Memorial at Runnymede on the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the original charter.

American Bar Association
1050 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20036
americanbar.org