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MVC'S MURRELL LIBRARY TO HOST HARRY POTTER EXHIBIT

New exhibition tells the story of the magical world of Harry Potter and its connections to Renaissance traditions and the history of science.

Marshall, MO. (October 8, 2009) – “Harry Potter’s World: Renaissance Science, Magic, and Medicine,” a traveling exhibition opening at the Murrell Memorial Library on Wednesday, Oct. 21st, uses materials from the National Library of Medicine to explore Harry Potter’s magical world and its roots in Renaissance traditions.

In 1997, British author J. K. Rowling introduced the world to Harry Potter and a literary phenomenon was born. Millions of readers have followed Harry to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry where he discovers his heritage, encounters new plants and animals and perfects his magical abilities. Although a fictional story, the “Harry Potter” series is partially based on Renaissance traditions that played an important role in the development of Western science, including alchemy, astrology and natural philosophy. Incorporating the work of several 15th- and 16th-century thinkers, the “Harry Potter” books examine important ethical topics such as the desire for knowledge, the effects of prejudice and the responsibility that comes with power.

Exhibit panels feature the works of 15th- and 16th-century thinkers, such as naturalist Konrad Gesner, alchemist Nicolas Flamel and occultist Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, and explore their understandings of natural philosophy, medicine and magic. The panels also highlight illustrations from Renaissance texts of some of the fantastic creatures and plants featured in “Harry Potter,” including basilisks, dragons, merpeople and mandrakes, and use them to explore the intersection between the novels and Renaissance thinkers, lore and practices.

“We are delighted to have been selected as a site for this exhibition,” said Library Director Pam Reeder. “The study of Renaissance magic, science and medicine adds a fascinating dimension to “Harry Potter” for both children and adults. For example, alchemist Nicolas Flamel is fictionally featured in “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.” Flamel was a real 15th-century scholar whose experiments with metals influenced the development of modern chemistry. Our library is thrilled to explore exhibition themes, including the development of Western science, through a series of fun, informative and innovative programs.”

The National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland organized the exhibition. The exhibition tour is coordinated by the American Library Association Public Programs Office, Chicago. For more information about the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health visit www.nlm.nih.gov.

In conjunction with the Harry Potter exhibition, there will be a seminar series Oct. 19 and Oct. 26, from 7-8 p.m. each night in the Ferguson Center R. Wilson Brown room, on the MVC campus.

Dr. Stephen Patton, MVC professor of chemistry, will present, "The End of Science and the Beginning of Magic," at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 19 in the Ferguson Center's R. Wilson Brown room. Patton proposes that there have been five periods of normal scientific and religious activity over the last 1000 years. These "paradigms," were first mentioned in the landmark book "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions," by Thomas Kuhn. Patton's seminar examines the relationship between these paradigms and periods of scientific revolution or religious awakening.

MVC Criminal Justice Professor Jon Duke, will present "The History of Prisons: from Biblical Holding Cell to the Quaker Prison and Beyond," at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 26 in R. Wilson Brown. Duke's seminar will explore the 500 year history of prisons in America.

The seminars are free and open to the public and no reservations are required. For more information, contact Special Events Coordinator Brian Hampton, hamptonb@moval.edu "Harry Potter's World: Renaissance Science, Magic, and Medicine" will be on display at the library until Friday, Nov. 20.

ABOUT MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE

Missouri Valley College is a liberal arts college that provides educational, social and cultural experiences in a decidedly Christian environment. Established in 1889, MVC offers over 30 majors and 7 pre-professional programs, and 15 sports. The most popular majors include education and business, and the newest majors are nursing, graphic design, dance, and hospitality/tourism management, which will begin in Fall 2009. The liberal arts heritage focuses on scholarship, critical thinking and academic excellence to prepare students to become members of a responsible citizenry. For more information, call (660) 831-4000 or visit www.moval.edu.

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