FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 16, 2017

Contact: Meg McSweeney
(215)801-8876
mcsweeney@dlar.org

Photos: available upon request

Free Lecture on African American Patriots
at the David Library

WASHINGTON CROSSING, PA -- Historian Judith L. Van Buskirk will present a lecture titled Standing in Their Own Light: African American Patriots in the American Revolution, at the David Library of the American Revolution on Wednesday, June 14 at 7:30 PM. It will be held in the Library’s lecture hall located at 1201 River Road, Washington Crossing. Admission is free, but reservations are required and can be made by calling (215)493-6776 ext. 100, or by sending an email to rsvp@dlar.org.

Judith Van Buskirk is Professor of History at the State University of New York, Cortland. She is the author of Generous Enemies: Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York, considered one of the best accounts of the American Revolution in New York.

In 2002, at a Fourth of July lecture she gave in Mount Vernon, New York, Professor Van Buskirk met two African American gentlemen who were veterans of the Pacific theater in World War II. She realized they had stories to tell, and referred them to a project at Rutgers University, which at the time was collecting soldier testimonies from the Second World War. But she also remembered her Uncle Bud who died at age 19 in Okinawa. “All that is left of him is a box with a few belongings, including a Purple Heart. He never got to tell his story,” she says. “The veterans of Mount Vernon and my uncle blended together and inspired me to look into the forgotten veterans of the country’s founding war – the American Revolution.”
Following 13 years of research and writing, her newest book, *Standing in Their Own Light: African American Patriots in the American Revolution*, was published this year by the University of Oklahoma Press for its “Campaigns and Commanders” imprint. Much of the research for the book took place at the David Library using its unparalleled collection of service and pension records from the Revolutionary War.

“Stories revealed in the revolutionary war pension records show the high stakes choices made by African American soldiers, who moved from a society that accepted slavery as a given to a world that questioned slavery at every turn,” says Professor Van Buskirk. In her lecture she will examine how the struggle for American independence moved from the battlefield to the courthouse after the war, and how personal conflicts contributed to the larger struggle against slavery and legal inequality. She will put the Black veterans’ stories in historical context, noting that conditions of slavery varied both before and after the war, that degrees of integration differed across the Continental Army, and that the war had divergent effects on the both northern and southern states.

The David Library is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of American history between 1750 and 1800. Over the years it has awarded residential research fellowships to nearly 200 scholars of Early America. Professor Van Buskirk was a David Library Fellow in 1995 and 2003. 

###