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From Carpetbagger Reputation to Senate Chairmanships, Documentary Traces Jay's Half-Century Journey in West Virginia

Charleston, W.Va. – June 12, 2015 – A new television documentary from West Virginia Public Broadcasting, **Jay: A Rockefeller's Journey**, traces the 50-year public service career of John D. Rockefeller IV, while capturing much of the political history of West Virginia, his adopted home.

The 2-hour premiere broadcast will air Monday, June 22 at 9pm.

"We're proud to share this unlikely story, where a young man born of privilege falls in love with the people of one of the poorest states in America, and how that relationship transforms them both," said Scott Finn, Executive Director of West Virginia Public Broadcasting.

The retired United States Senator, who turns 78 the week of the broadcast, discusses in many instances for the first time the once-notorious reputation of the Rockefeller name, and life as a child in the home of John D. Rockefeller III.

The Senator discusses his personal motivations, inspirations, and successes. He also shares his insecurities, failures and the lessons-learned from his arrival in West Virginia as a social worker at age 26, to his chairmanship of some of the most powerful committees in the U. S. Senate.

Produced by award-winning Senior Producers Suzanne Higgins and Russ Barbour, the program includes in-depth conversations with the Senator, his wife Sharon Percy Rockefeller, legislative colleagues, constituents, staff members, historians, and journalists.

"The Senator explains he knew as a very young man, with all the wealth he would one day inherit, he needed to get out of what he calls his 'privilege zone,' to experience the challenges that so many others face," said Higgins. "His decision to go into public service and join an anti-poverty program under the Kennedy Administration surprised many closest to him."

"For years after arriving here he battled a carpetbagger reputation," Higgins added. "He talks candidly about that, and about having to prove himself in West Virginia over and over again."

The program also includes in-depth conversations with legislative colleagues, constituents, staff members, historians, and journalists. The broadcast threads archival news footage from the West Virginia State Archives and Marshall University's Special Collections, with material from the Rockefeller Archive Center, donated photographs, film, and West Virginia Public Broadcasting video.

Several photographs seen in the film are personal photos taken by Rockefeller.

"For me, one of the most interesting aspects of this documentary is how archival film, photographs, videotape and other materials work together with recent interviews and narrative to present a compelling story of conviction," said Barbour, who is also the program's videographer and editor.

In March Higgins received the Virginias Associated Press Broadcasters' Lifetime Achievement Award. She's also the recipient of the national Pew Charitable Trust's Batten Award for

Excellence in Civic Journalism, the Edward R. Murrow Award for Investigative Reporting, an Emmy Award, and several West Virginia Associated Press Broadcasters Association awards.

Barbour is the recipient of the WV Film's 2008 Film of the Year award. He's also won an Emmy for **West Virginians Remember World War II**, and produced **Reconstructing Bill: The Story of Governor William C. Marland**, named Best Documentary at the 2009 West Virginia Filmmakers Festival.

Jay: A Rockefeller's Journey is presented with financial assistance from the West Virginia Humanities Council, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations do not necessarily represent those of the West Virginia Humanities Council or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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