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2018 Capitol ornament unveiling

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Contact: Kara O'Keeffe
608-261-9596
kara.okeeffe@wisconsinhistory.org

Madison, Wis. – The 2018 Wisconsin State Capitol ornament, presented by the Wisconsin Historical Foundation, will be unveiled at a press conference on Thursday, Oct. 4 at 10:00 am in the Assembly Parlor at the State Capitol.

This year's ornament is a tribute to the badger statue located at the entrance to the governor's office on the first floor of the State Capitol. The bronze statue was created as a gift from the people of the state of Wisconsin for the battleship USS Wisconsin (BB-9) in 1899.

"This year's ornament is a great way to celebrate the badger statue that all visitors to the State Capitol get to see on tour and touch for good luck," said Dave Wilder, executive director of the Wisconsin Historical Foundation. "All proceeds from the sale of these ornaments will support the State Capitol Restoration Fund."

The badger statue was designed by artist Paul Kupper of Milwaukee for the USS Wisconsin (BB-9) and made with bronze salvage from Spanish cannons captured in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. The statue was designed to include the state motto "Forward." The shield also holds a plow and fouled anchor, which were part of the "arms of the commonwealth." The statue was placed on the bridge of the ship located directly above the thirteen guns.

In 1987, Governor Tommy Thompson signed an executive order creating a commission to coordinate public awareness about the USS Wisconsin (BB-64) as it was being recommissioned. A staffer of Governor Thompson's found the badger statue on display in the U.S. Naval Academy Superintendent's formal garden while at a reception in Annapolis. Governor Thompson worked to bring the statue back to Wisconsin for the 1988 celebration of the second USS Wisconsin recommissioning. In order to persuade the Navy to lease the statue back to Wisconsin for display, Governor Thompson traded the USS Wisconsin's silver service, which was on loan to

the state from the Navy. The Navy now displays the complete silver service at the Naval Yard in Philadelphia. The badger statue is on lease to the State of Wisconsin from the U.S. Navy, and the Wisconsin Department of Administration must renew the lease periodically to maintain the statue in the State Capitol.

Since 2004, the proceeds from ornament sales have supported over $75,000 in restoration projects around the Capitol building. Previous ornament sales have helped to fund the visitor's bird's eye view from the glass perch inside the dome of the State Capitol.

The ornament is set in a special gift box and will be available for purchase while supplies last at Orange Tree Imports, Wisconsin Historical Museum, State Capitol Tours, Monona Terrace, The Bruce Company, MMoCA and the Executive Residence. Online ornament purchases may be made by visiting wisconsinhistory.org/-capitolornament. This year's ornament is also sponsored by Fincantieri Marine Group.

About the Wisconsin Historical Foundation
The Wisconsin Historical Foundation exists to advance the mission of the Wisconsin Historical Society: to help people connect to the past by collecting, preserving and sharing stories. The Wisconsin Historical Foundation, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, receives grants and private contributions benefitting the Society and administers the membership program. Visit wisconsinhistory.org for more information.