

October 10, 2003

CHAIRPERSON

Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee
Stamp Development
C/O U.S. Postal Service Headquarters
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Room 5670
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Chairperson,

“As a printer, moralist, essayist, inventor, diplomat, and philosopher, Benjamin Franklin was a model for the national character,” is quoted in the Academic American Encyclopedia. He is a true patriot who brought our youthful country forward. The World Book Encyclopedia describes him as one who “served his nation as a statesman, scientist, and public leader”. The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) notes that he is, “one of the most extraordinary human beings the world has ever known.” Franklin stands in the front rank of men who built the United States. He was the only man who signed all four of these key documents in American History: The Declaration of Independence (1776), The Treaty of Alliance with France (1778), The Treaty of Peace with Great Britain (1783), and The Constitution of the United States (1787).

We now have an opportunity to commemorate the 300th birthday of this remarkable Philadelphian on January 17, 2006 with a stamp which identifies and illustrates one of his greatest achievements. He has yet to be recognized for bifocals, a type of spectacle so many people around the globe have worn. As Newsweek Magazine stated in a January 11, 1999 featured article, reading glasses are one of the most important inventions of the last 2000 years. Franklin's adaptation allows us to use one pair of glasses instead of two.

This innovation has had an impact on man's progress that is nearly incalculable. I hope this is a fresh idea which you might examine. I understand that it takes approximately three years to have an idea reach fruition, but perhaps this could be given priority if members of your committee agree that it is appropriate. Imagine one side of a new stamp with the facial portrait of this founding father while the other side has the image of a pair of eighteenth century round frame bifocals. What a wonderful acknowledgement it would be. A great man along with his simple but truly significant invention!

I believe these are compelling reasons to consider stamp honoring this man on this date for this specific accomplishment. I think this stamp will become recognized the world over because his name is known the world over and this invention is used and appreciated the world over. His tri-centennial can be recognized with the stamp, “Benjamin Franklin and His Bifocals”.

Thanks for your time and assistance.

David A. Fleishman, M.D.
Ophthalmologist