PRINCETON, N.J.—The contested legacy of Woodrow Wilson forms the focus of a new exhibition and panel discussion at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

Opening April 4, the exhibition documents not only the positive but also the negative aspects of Wilson’s tenure as 13th president of Princeton University and 28th president of the United States. The April 8 panel discussion will provide an educational and panoramic view of the many aspects of Woodrow Wilson’s life and career.

Among historians, Wilson is consistently ranked as one of the country’s great presidents, noted for his successful domestic legislative agenda in his first term and international achievements in his second. At Princeton, many entities bear Wilson’s name, honoring his important contributions to both the institution and the nation.

Yet, Wilson was also a highly divisive figure in his time, alienating many and denying others the fullness of their humanity on racial grounds. Under his watch, Princeton University remained a bastion of white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, and, as U.S. president, the federal civil service was re-segregated, closing one of the few paths to African American advancement.

Woodrow Wilson Exhibition
Opens April 4, Bernstein Gallery, Robertson Hall

The exhibition on Woodrow Wilson draws on modern scholarship, newly digitized resources and Princeton’s special collections to paint a more complete picture of Wilson than is often presented, highlighting the ways in which he failed a great number of Americans. Through correspondence, writings, photographs, newspapers and other documents that place Wilson in historical context, visitors will gain a fuller understanding of his complexities and why he continues to evoke both admiration and opprobrium nearly a century after his death.

The hours of the exhibit are as follows.

September–May: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
June–August: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

To schedule a tour for a large group, contact Kate Somers at 609-497-2441 or ksomers@princeton.edu.
Woodrow Wilson: A Panel Discussion
April 8, 4:30 p.m., Dodds Auditorium, Robertson Hall

The April 8 panel discussion will be held in conjunction with the art exhibit at 4:30 p.m., Dodds Auditorium, Robertson Hall. A public reception in the Bernstein Gallery will follow the discussion. Panelists include:

- Mia Bay, director, Center for Race and Ethnicity, Rutgers University; author, “To Tell the Truth Freely: the Life of Ida B. Wells”
- A. Scott Berg ’71, Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer; author, “Wilson” (invited)
- Eric Yellin ’07, associate professor of history and American studies, University of Richmond; author, “Racism in the Nation’s Service: Government Workers and the Color Line in Woodrow Wilson's America”
- Chad Williams ’04, associate professor and chair, Department of African and Afro-American Studies, Brandeis University; author, “Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era”

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The exhibit and panel discussion were compiled by Princeton University’s Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, a division of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections and the University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.