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**NEON MUSEUM TO CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARY OF MOULIN ROUGE WITH  
SPECIAL PROGRAM, THURSDAY, MAY 23**

**LAS VEGAS (April 2013)** – On Thursday, May 23, the [Neon Museum](#) will host a special program commemorating the 58th anniversary of the opening of Las Vegas’ famed Moulin Rouge casino. The Moulin Rouge sign, designed by Betty Willis, is one of more than 150 neon signs preserved and viewed by thousands of visitors each year in the Neon Museum’s Neon Boneyard exhibition area.

On the evening of May 23, noted Las Vegas filmmaker Stan Armstrong will screen portions his latest project, the documentary titled “The Misunderstood Legend of the Las Vegas Moulin Rouge,” at the Neon Museum. Also on hand will be Claytee White,

director, Oral History Research Center at UNLV Libraries. Dr. Michael Green, professor of history, College of Southern Nevada, will serve as the panel moderator.

The evening will begin with a meet-and-greet with the panelists for Neon Museum members only at 5 p.m. Doors will open to the public at 5:30 p.m. and the program will begin promptly at 6 p.m.

What follows is an excerpt from the book, “Spectacular – A History of Las Vegas Neon,” authored by Melissa Johnson, Carrie Schomig and Dorothy Wright and published by the Neon Museum, about the Moulin Rouge:

*At a time when all of the hotels on the Las Vegas Strip were racially segregated, the Moulin Rouge Casino opened in West Las Vegas in May 1955. In the Las Vegas Review-Journal, advertisements billed the Rouge as “the nation’s first major inter-racial hotel.”*

*Unlike the other casinos, black entertainers and guests could stay at Moulin Rouge. Heavyweight champion Joe Louis greeted visitors, and from the start, the club had sold-out shows that attracted A-list entertainers such as Pearl Bailey, Harry Belafonte, Tallulah Bankhead, Nat King Cole, and Sammy Davis, Jr. The Moulin Rouge’s sign featured stylized, cursive script and was designed by Western Neon’s Betty Willis. Despite the casino’s success, the Moulin Rouge shut down after only five months of operation under uncertain circumstances. After remaining shuttered for nearly fifty years, the building burned in 2003. The Moulin Rouge’s characteristically stylish neon signage, however, survived the blaze and is in the Neon Museum’s Boneyard.*

*Moulin Rouge sign designer Willis is best known for her iconic 1959 design for the “Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada” sign in the median of South Las Vegas Boulevard. The sign has become the symbol of Las Vegas ever since its installation at the south end of the Strip, and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*

For more information about this special event at the Neon Museum, go to [www.neonmuseum.org](http://www.neonmuseum.org) or call (702) 387-6366.

## **ABOUT THE NEON MUSEUM**

Founded in 1996, the Neon Museum is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to collecting, preserving, studying and exhibiting iconic Las Vegas signs for educational, historic and cultural enrichment. In addition to an approximately two-acre Neon Museum campus, which includes the outdoor exhibition space known as the Neon Boneyard, the museum also encompasses a visitors’ center housed inside the former La Concha Motel lobby as well as 15 restored signs installed as public art throughout downtown

Las Vegas. Public education, outreach, research, archival preservation and a grant-funded neon sign survey represent a selection of the museum's ongoing projects. Both the Neon Boneyard and the La Concha Visitors' Center are located at 770 Las Vegas Blvd. North in Las Vegas. For more information, visit [www.NeonMuseum.org](http://www.NeonMuseum.org).

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