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NEWS RELEASE

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Head of the National Security Archives to keynote Open Government Conference in January

Seattle---The Executive Director of the National Security Archives at George Washington University and a frequent guest on the former Colbert Report, Tom Blanton, will be the keynote speaker for the Washington Coalition for Open Government's annual Open Government Conference January 23rd.

Once told by Stephen Colbert that he "has a bee in his bonnet over this open government stuff", Tom Blanton has been a champion for open government for decades. He was the winner of the George Polk Award in April 2000 for "piercing self-serving veils of government secrecy, guiding journalists in search for the truth, and informing us all." He is series editor of the Archive's online and book publications of over a million pages of previously secret U.S. government documents obtained through the Archive's more than 50,000 Freedom of Information Act requests. He co-founded the virtual network of international FOI advocates www.freedominfo.org, served as founding co-chair of the public interest coalition OpenTheGovernment.org, and also served on the first steering committee of the international Open Government Partnership. He was a frequent guest on the former Colbert Report.

The annual conference will feature panelists and speakers on topics like *How to Build a Better Mouse Trap: More user friendly dispute resolution of open government matters*, *Dealing with Broad Requests*, and *Threats to Transparency: A Legislative Update*. Guest panelists include, among others, former State Attorney General Rob McKenna, open government attorney Michele Earl-Hubbard, and WCOG President, Toby Nixon. The conference is Saturday, January 23rd from 9 to 3 at Pacific Tower in Seattle. For more information and to register go to www.washingtoncog.org. The Washington Coalition for Open Government is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring transparency and openness in government.