



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Malina Tabor, Director of Marketing

mtabor@arkmfa.org

(501)837-6566

Tara Escolin, Public Relations Manager

tescolin@arkmfa.org

(501)396-0313

Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Announces Galleries Endowed and Named by Harriet and Warren Stephens

The Galleries Honor Key Contributors to the Museum's History

April 18, 2023 (LITTLE ROCK, Ark.) – Today, the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts (AMFA) announced that eight galleries have been endowed and named by Harriet and Warren Stephens to honor individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to the formation of the museum since its inception by the Fine Arts Club in 1914.

Harriet and Warren are long-time museum supporters, who chair AMFA's Building Committee and Foundation Board respectively, while co-chairing the successful capital campaign, "Reimagining the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts," which has raised more than \$160 million to date.

The named spaces will debut April 22, 2023, as part of AMFA's grand opening celebration. They encompass nearly 20,000 square feet of space and showcase the AMFA Foundation Collection, temporary exhibitions, and artist commissions.

Honorees are memorialized on each gallery wall with narrative plaques commemorating their efforts on behalf of the museum.

Galleries

Fine Arts Club New Media Gallery recognizes the Fine Arts Club (FAC), whose members first dreamed of bringing fine art to the state in 1914. The FAC founding members' vision evolved into the Museum of Fine Arts in 1937, and then later into the Arkansas Arts Center in 1961, with the assistance of the Junior League of Little Rock and Governor and Mrs. Winthrop Rockefeller;

Berta and John Baird Gallery honors Berta Baird, President of the Fine Arts Club, 1927 through 1936, and her husband, John Baird, for their leadership and perseverance to establish the Museum of Fine Arts, the first permanent facility for showcasing art in Arkansas in 1937, and their generosity in creating the museum's original endowment;

Governor Winthrop Rockefeller Gallery named in memory of the former Arkansas governor, for his generosity as a private citizen in championing the Arkansas Arts Center (now AMFA) as a vital resource for the state and his unwavering support of the arts while in office, 1967 through 1971;

Jeannette Edris Rockefeller Gallery named in memory of Mrs. Rockefeller who worked to bring the Arkansas Arts Center (now AMFA) to life, for her service as President of the Board of Trustees, 1960 through 1968, and her support of the arts as First Lady of Arkansas, 1967 through 1971;

Townsend Wolfe Gallery commemorates the museum's longtime executive director and chief curator, from 1968 through 2002, for his extraordinary leadership and vision in making the Arkansas Arts Center (now AMFA) a premier collector of works on paper;

Jackson T. Stephens Gallery is named in memory of businessman and philanthropist Jack Stephens, whose generosity to the Arkansas Arts Center (now AMFA) and the capital campaign of 1996 assisted the museum in better serving the people of his beloved home state. His personal collection is on loan to the museum, where it has been accessible to the public for almost 20 years;

Little Rock Gallery is dedicated to the citizens of Little Rock who supported the museum's mission, most recently through the public-private partnership that powered the capital campaign. In 2016, the residents of Little Rock voted for a bond issue backed

by a hotel room tax that resulted in a contribution of 31.245 million dollars to the museum, and;

The Harriet and Warren Stephens Family Gallery honors their children, their spouses, and their grandchildren, for inspiring them to co-chair the Reimagining of the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Capital Campaign for their generations of Arkansans and those to follow.

Of the named galleries, Harriet Stephens stated:

“Warren and I are humbled and honored to have the opportunity to acknowledge the 109-year-history of what is now the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, and the inspirational people and organizations integral to its very existence. It is thanks to their efforts, vision, and commitment that the museum exists today. It was with great thought, respect, and historical purpose that we dedicated these eight spaces. The galleries celebrate both the honorees and the arts; and with our inclusion of commemorative plaques, we further illuminate the rich legacy and great efforts upon which AMFA is built.”

AMFA’s Executive Director, Dr. Victoria Ramirez added:

“Harriet and Warren Stephens have been extraordinarily generous in their support of the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts in so many ways. The gifting and naming of these galleries, which are contained within the Harriet and Warren Stephens Galleries, forever enshrine those who have played critical roles in AMFA’s history. These galleries shine a light on the unique, decades-long relationship the museum has had with its supporters and the community. Nobody better embodies this spirit than Harriet and Warren Stephens. On behalf of AMFA, I extend to them our deepest gratitude and appreciation.”

Each permanent collection gallery features works of art that have been recently cleaned or conserved, as well as temporary exhibitions. The entire AMFA Foundation Collection totals 14,000 works.

Photographs of AMFA by Dutch photographer Iwan Baan, a recipient of the Julius Shulman Photography Award, known for his iconic documentation of celebrated architectural sites, are now available in [AMFA’s Press Kit](#).

###

About the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts:

Founded in 1937, the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts is the largest cultural institution of its kind in the state, offering a unique blend of visual, educational, and performing arts experiences. AMFA is committed to featuring diverse media and artistic perspectives within its permanent collection as well as through rotating temporary exhibitions. AMFA's international collection spans eight centuries, with strengths in works on paper, and includes notable holdings by artists from Arkansas, the South, and across the United States and Europe.

With a vibrant mix of ideas, cultures, people, and places, the museum extends this commitment to diversity through its dynamic children's theatre and performing arts program, the innovative Windgate Art School, and community-focused educational programs for all ages. Located in Little Rock's oldest urban green space, MacArthur Park, AMFA's landmark building and grounds are designed by Studio Gang and SCAPE, in collaboration with Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects.