

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON

FOR RELEASE NOT BEFORE
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Remarks of Mr. Samuel H. Kress at the
Dedication Ceremonies on March 17, 1941
at 10:00 PM

To be released for publication on delivery, and not
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"Mr. President, Mrs. Roosevelt, Mr. Chief Justice,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

"I am sure that I voice the unanimous regret that Mr. Andrew Mellon is not here, to participate in the fulfillment of his admirable undertaking.

"Like Mr. Mellon, I also felt the need of a National Gallery which would be shared by all the people of our country, and contain only the finest works of art, contributed by those who wished to give their greatest treasures to the Nation that has done so much for all of us.

"In forming my collection I have had in mind to provide for the study and enjoyment of the public, as complete a representation as possible of the Italian School of painting and sculpture of quality. I have endeavored to acquire the best examples of the most representative masters of this important school, beginning with the 13th century painters, Giotto and Duccio, and extending through the great periods in Florence, Siena, Umbria, Venice and

Northern Italy, and ending with the Venetians of the 18th century. I felt that by so concentrating, I would be able to make the greatest contribution for comprehensive study and understanding of that school which really gave the earliest fundamental inspiration and also maintained superior quality in art throughout the Renaissance period. Among the exhibits in this building are some of man's best works of art from the 13th to the 18th centuries, and the building itself is possibly the very height of man's accomplishment for its purpose.

"It is a great privilege to give our best to our country. As an older person, I feel this particularly now when we are asking our young men to place their lives at the disposal and service of their Government.

"I love my paintings, having lived surrounded by them for many years. Now the walls of my home are bare of Italian paintings and I shall miss them. But I am happy in the thought that, during my lifetime, my collection intact is settled in my country, in a permanent home within this magnificent modern structure. It is my hope that this contribution will grow in appreciation with the passing years, to be enjoyed by all future generations.

"And so, Mr. President, I turn over my collection to you for the benefit and enjoyment of all the people, to be preserved as part of that spiritual heritage which is our greatest and most treasured possession."
