

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROMINENT AMERICANIST APPOINTED
NATIONAL GALLERY SENIOR CURATOR

WASHINGTON, D.C. May 26, 1977. John Wilmerding, Leon E. Williams Professor of Art at Dartmouth College, a distinguished scholar, innovative teacher, and prolific writer on American art, has been appointed Curator of American Art at the National Gallery, it was announced today by J. Carter Brown, the Gallery's Director. Mr. Wilmerding's appointment becomes effective in the fall.

Mr. Wilmerding succeeds the late William P. Campbell, who passed on in December, and, as did Mr. Campbell, will also bear the title of Senior Curator.

Mr. Wilmerding is particularly well-known for his important investigative scholarship on marine painters Fitz Hugh Lane (1804-1865) and Robert Salmon (1775-1844). In the former case he raised a previously neglected artist to a recognizable major status when, in 1966 he prepared the first important exhibition of Lane's work and subsequently published the definitive volume on the artist (1971).

He is also the author of numerous articles and many more books including Penguin's American Art (1976), one of the distinguished Pelican series representing each field of art history, for which the finest scholars are chosen to write the volume in their field; A History of American Marine Painting (1968); Robert Salmon, Painter of Ship and Shore

(more)

(1971); Winslow Homer (1972); and Pittura Americana dell 'Ottocento (Milan, 1969). In 1970, he wrote 19th Century America, Painting and Sculpture with John K. Howat and in 1973 edited and co-authored The Genius of American Painting with several other Americanists.

Mr. Wilmerding's duties will include cataloguing the National Gallery's collection of American art, which is comprised of exceptionally fine national treasures such as Copley's Watson and the Shark, Stuart's The Skater, and Homer's Breezing Up. His responsibilities also will include acquisitions, exhibitions, and curatorial supervision of the Gallery's American collection.

Mr. Wilmerding was born in 1938 in Boston. He graduated from Harvard College in 1960 and received his Masters Degree and Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1961 and 1965. He joined the Dartmouth faculty in 1965 as Assistant Professor and in 1968 was made Associate Professor. He also became Chairman of the Art Department in 1968 and in 1971 Chairman of the Humanities Division. In 1972 he was Visiting Lecturer in the History of Art at Yale University and in 1976 Visiting Professor of Fine Arts at Harvard. He has lectured at numerous museums and other schools, colleges and universities.

He has served on the Visiting Committees of the American Paintings Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Paintings Department at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and Boston's Institute of Contemporary Arts.

He is Honorary Curator of Paintings at the Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts and also serves on several advisory and editorial boards of the New England Preservation Society, the Dunlap Society, the Art Bulletin, the American Art Journal, the American Art Review and Historical New Hampshire.

In addition, he is a trustee of the Shelburne Museum, the Wyeth Endowment for American Art, the St. Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire, Groton School, the Lewis Walpole Library in Farmington, Connecticut and the Foundation for Art Education.

William P. Campbell joined the Gallery's staff in 1951. As Curator of American Art, he was in charge of the Gallery's nearly one thousand American paintings and of acquisitions in that field. During his twenty-five years of service at the Gallery, he organized a long series of exhibitions which included the American primitive paintings in the Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbish collection and the work of Winslow Homer, John Gadsby Chapman, Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Eakins, John Sloan, George Bellows and John Singleton Copley. Mr. Campbell was also a consultant to The White House and the Department of State. He began his career in 1949 at the Worcester Art Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs, contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.