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Robert H. Smith
President Emeritus
National Gallery of Art
July 21, 1928-December 29, 2009



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Photo © Bachrach

"The National Gallery of Art owes a profound debt of gratitude to Bob Smith for his unflinching generosity, connoisseurship, and leadership throughout some four decades. He carried on the Mellon tradition of stewardship and philanthropy in a way that will have a lasting impact on the Gallery—its collection, staff, scholars, and visitors—for

generations to come. The Gallery extends its deepest sympathy to his wife Clarice, and to the members of his family, and to his wide circle of friends and colleagues," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

In September 2003 Robert H. Smith stepped down as president and trustee of the National Gallery of Art after decades of distinguished service. He began his leadership role with the Gallery in 1982, when he became the first chair of the newly formed Trustees' Council, a national advisory body to the Board of Trustees. In 1985 he joined the board as a general trustee upon the retirement of Paul Mellon, a founding benefactor of the Gallery, and in 1993 he succeeded John R. Stevenson as president.

Smith played a pivotal role in several major Gallery initiatives during his tenure on the Board of Trustees. After serving on the campaign committee for the Gallery's Patrons' Permanent Fund, in 1986 he became founding co-chair, with Katharine Graham, of The Circle, the Gallery's annual membership group. In 1991 he chaired the Gallery's Fiftieth Anniversary Gift Committee, a group of Washington business and community leaders who made major gifts to secure acquisitions for the Gallery. He also chaired the Gallery's New Century Fund campaign, which raised more than \$123 million for a variety of private funding priorities.

During his tenure as president, he helped steer the Gallery through a period of substantial growth. The Dutch Cabinet Galleries, the Sculpture Garden, and the West Building ground floor Sculpture Galleries opened under his watch. He provided a magnificent inaugural exhibition of Renaissance bronzes from his personal collection for the opening of the Sculpture Galleries in the fall of 2002.

Robert Smith and his wife Clarice are Benefactors of the Gallery and have given numerous gifts of art to the collection since 1972. On April 8, 2008, the National Gallery of Art announced that the Robert H. Smith Collection, one of the most important private holdings of Renaissance bronze sculpture, had been promised to the Gallery by Smith. The collection encapsulates the history of Renaissance bronze sculpture in Europe at a superior level. It also includes outstanding carvings in ivory and bronze.

The Smiths also supported Gallery exhibitions and initiatives, such as staff

development and scholarly endeavors, including the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, as well as scientific and conservation research.

In 2006, at the twentieth anniversary celebration of The Circle, Smith remarked, "We are here to celebrate the great power of philanthropy. The course of human history is determined not by what happens in the skies, but by what takes place in the hearts of men and women. It is important to know not only how to make a living, but also how to make a life. We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give."

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>).

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

Press Office

National Gallery of Art

2000B South Club Drive

Landover, MD 20785

phone: (202) 842-6353 e-mail: pressinfo@nga.gov

Deborah Ziska

Chief of Press and Public Information

(202) 842-6353

ds-ziska@nga.gov