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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SAMA’S BEDFORD “AMBASSADORS” PREPARE WAY FOR NEW MUSEUM**

Bedford – In May 2017, the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art announced its plans for a fifth museum site to be located in Bedford County. Since that time, the Museum and Clark Contractors, Inc. of Bedford have been busy retrofitting Bedford’s historic Anderson House into a museum of fine arts. But some of the most important work has been done not by the Museum or its contractors, but by a committed group of volunteers known as “ambassadors.” SAMA’s ambassadors have been an invaluable resource as they pave the way for the Museum’s expansion into a new community. Comprised of artists, business leaders, philanthropists and even a few members of SAMA’s Board of Trustees, the ambassadors are Bedford-area residents who have volunteered their time and services, offered professional expertise, fostered business and community relationships, and have helped spread the word of what SAMA has to offer the Bedford community.

Let us introduce you to these wonderful individuals as they share their thoughts on SAMA’s new museum, expected to open to the public in May.



(From left) Meghan Wise, Mari-Pat Beene, Bob Webb, Dean Lemley, Cindy Yetter, Nicole Clark, Stephen Monticone, Recie Dolan, Steve George, Tabitha Barbitto

**Mari-Pat Beene, SAMA Trustee**

*“My involvement with SAMA-Bedford is primarily through my duty as a SAMA board member and, secondly, to ensure this project is successful for the quality of life for those who live in and visit Bedford. I am assisting the Site Coordinator of the facility with introductions to community members and businesses. I am very supportive of her vision of SAMA-Bedford’s visual styling.”*

**Nicole Clark**

*“As an ambassador for SAMA-Bedford, I am looking forward to helping with the Museum’s youth in art education programs, community events and entertainment venues. I am proud to be involved with such an exciting new chapter in the history of Bedford.”*

**Recie Dolan**

*“The minute I heard about SAMA coming to the Anderson House, I knew I wanted to be involved. Immediately I began searching for details and telling friends about my intention to somehow be part of it. As an artist, it feels important to me personally, and as a resident I know it represents significant and positive changes for Bedford. I’m deeply grateful to be part of these early efforts. ART SAVES LIVES and this initiative will support our community in ways not yet even imagined.”*

**Jerry Hawk, SAMA Trustee**

*“As a SAMA board member and also a SAMA-Bedford ambassador, I believe SAMA’s Bedford Museum will truly be a first-class museum for both the people of our area as well as tourists visiting our great town. Since 1976, SAMA has been mounting exhibitions designed to evoke an interest, understanding, and appreciation of fine art. Through SAMA’s award-winning Arts-in-Education and Museum Healthcare Partnership programs, we will see a strong outreach to the local Bedford area community. In addition to engaging local programs, conservative estimates calculate a return to the Bedford community of over \$2 million per year.”*

**Stephen Monticone**

*“As a representative of Omni Bedford Springs Resort & Spa, I have joined with the SAMA ambassadors to help build a strong partnership between the two groups. Omni is committed to enriching the cultural offerings in Bedford for the resort and community. Working with SAMA is vital for arts awareness and education.”*

**Bob Webb**

*“My initial involvement with SAMA-Bedford came about through my employment at the Bedford County Visitors Bureau. We are happy to be included in the developing stages of such an important cultural asset to the town and county and fully appreciate the importance this facility will have on the “visitor experience” as well as the community at large. Furthermore, on a more personal level, I’ve been involved in the art community in the Bedford area for over 35 years –*

*as a photographer, painter, arts council board member, board member and actor with the Bedford County Players, shop owner, and even art gallery owner in conjunction with my camera shop. In earlier years, I was a participant in SAMA's Biennial and Triennial exhibitions as a photographer. The history, art and culture of Bedford County has been a viable part of the majority of my life and I'm thrilled to be able to continue that association."*

**Meghan Wise**

*"Aside from my full-time job as Director of Financial Operations & Marketing at Howard Hanna Bardell Realty, I am an abstract artist, exhibiting paintings and drawings throughout galleries and restaurants in Pennsylvania. I have been a Bedford County resident for 28 years and am very involved with the community and promoting all of the exciting new venues or events Bedford County has to offer. I could not be more proud to talk about SAMA-Bedford with our local community and hope to remain a critical part of the Museum's success for years to come."*

**Cindy Yetter**

*"By exposing our children to the creative arts we open doors for them that can last a lifetime. SAMA chose Bedford! Its investment and presence here is for our families and its impact will contribute greatly to our beauty and uniqueness. I am here to open the door and invite you to see what SAMA will do for our wonderful community."*