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LORETTO MUSEUM TO HOST *NIGHT OF DISTINCTION*

Loretto – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art’s annual dinner-and-awards event, *Night of Distinction*, returns to the Loretto Museum this spring. The program, now in its seventh year, is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 21. *Night of Distinction* was established to honor individuals and organizations that have made an extraordinary impact on SAMA, the arts, and their communities.

This year, SAMA will present its prestigious Service to the Arts Award to Bonnie Hoffman. Judy and Dick Scholton will be honored with the Volunteerism Award, while Fred Danziger will receive the Award for Artistic Distinction. The Museum will present two Awards for Architectural Excellence to Blair County Courthouse and Saint Francis University’s Schwab Hall. Also being recognized at the event will be trustee Mary Weidlein, who will be honored with Trustee Emerita distinction.

Night of Distinction is scheduled for 6 to 9 p.m. on April 21. Cost is \$85 per person. Reservations are required by April 16. For reservations or more information, please call the Museum at (814) 472-3920.

Service to the Arts Award

For nearly two decades, Bonnie Hoffman has been the foundation of SAMA-Ligonier Valley’s volunteer support system. Through her passion, commitment, motivation, energy and professionalism, Hoffman has embodied the qualities associated with SAMA’s *Service to the Arts Award*.

Originally from New Jersey, Hoffman moved to Ligonier in 2000 with husband, artist William M. Hoffman, Jr. She soon joined the SAMA-Ligonier Valley Auxiliary, and since 2001, has served as the organization’s treasurer. As a member of the Auxiliary, she has spearheaded various projects including the Holiday Home Tour and Studio & Garden Tour. She has been a fixture on the Garden Party committee and served as event co-chair in 2008 and 2012.

Hoffman’s service extends far beyond SAMA. She is an active member of the Greensburg Art Center’s Gallery Committee, which is responsible for scheduling, planning and hanging exhibitions. For the last 15 years, she has served on the board of Southwestern

Pennsylvania Council for the Arts in various capacities including serving on the executive board as treasurer since 2007 and as principle liaison between the Council and its participating artists. She and her husband are active supporters of the Special Collection of Greater Latrobe High School, and the pair received the school's 2007 Art Gala Honoree Award for lifelong dedication to the creative arts.

Volunteerism Award

Volunteers are critical to any non-profit organization, and SAMA is fortunate to have two of the best in Judy and Dick Scholton. Government agencies, churches and non-profits alike have benefitted from the Hollidaysburg couple's spirit of volunteerism.

Well-known throughout the banking community, Mr. Scholton has worked in the industry for more than 53 years in the Blair County region, and today is a regional financial consultant with AmeriServ Bank in Hollidaysburg. Mrs. Scholton worked for Hayes, Large Architects for more than two decades and upon retirement opened and ran a Christian book store for 19 years.

The Scholtons' spirit of volunteerism has benefitted many in the Blair County region. Mr. Scholton has been involved with various charities and non-profits and sits on local government agencies. He presently is an active member of seven boards. The Scholtons have been attending SAMA's Gala for 25 years and are active volunteers with the Gala committee, Leadership Circle and set-up crew. Mrs. Scholton is deeply involved with her church and helps to cook for and feed the less fortunate once a week.

Award for Artistic Distinction

Fred Danziger is a contemporary landscape painter of extraordinary talent. Visitors of SAMA-Loretto may recall his popular 2016 retrospective, *The Light in Nature and Time*. Danziger also donated his painting of the *USS John P. Murtha* to benefit SAMA's Gala live auction last year.

Danziger's work has been featured in more than 20 solo exhibitions in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, as well as numerous group shows at New York City's Sherry French and K.R. Perlow galleries. His work is included in nearly 100 public collections, including 11 American museums. His acrylic painting, *Morning Flight*, is part of SAMA's permanent collection. He is represented by James Gallery in Pittsburgh, as well as galleries in Eastern Pennsylvania and New York City.

A native of Pittsburgh now residing in Elverson, Chester County, Danziger studied at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where he received the prestigious Cresson and Scheidt awards. Among his recent accolades was a nomination for a Mid-Atlantic Emmy last year for his illustration work on Philadelphia-area

broadcast documentaries. Another honor came last year when his painting, *Archaic Memory*, was featured on the cover of the State Museum in Harrisburg's magazine.

Awards for Architectural Excellence

Originally built in 1875, the **Blair County Courthouse** was renowned for its intricate stone carvings and five-story clock tower. In 1906, an addition was constructed under the direction of architect William Plack, who faithfully copied the original materials and style, making the addition seem an integral part of the original construction.

Despite its stately appearance, weather and time have taken their toll on the Courthouse, leading to its recent multi-year, multi-million-dollar renovation project. Developed by the County's Courthouse Preservation Oversight Team, the project is subject to the final approval of Commissioners Bruce Erb, Terry Tomassetti and Ted Beam. Serving on the team are conservator John A. Rita, architect David Albright, former President Judge Jolene Grubb Kopriva, Public Works Director Rocky Greenland, County Administrator Helen Schmitt and Commissioner Tomassetti.

Exterior work was tackled first, which included restoration of two front tower roofs, recreation and repair of missing and damaged stained glass windows, and restoration of the missing chin and gold leaf detail of the statue of *Lady Justice*, among other projects. Presently, the work continues with the 1875 Courthouse and 1906 Lawyers' Lobby, including restoration of 13 windows and their ornate walnut filigrees, removal and replacement of the HVAC system, improved lighting and audio, restoration of the original courtroom layout, and restoration of the ceiling and walls of the courtroom and lobby to their respective original Italian Gothic and American Renaissance treatments.

Throughout its nearly 85-year history, **Saint Francis University's Schwab Hall** has reinvented itself many times. Originally built as the home for the science programs, the "fire-proof brick" structure has housed many different academic and administrative departments over its lifetime.

In July 2015, ground was broken for a year-long, multi-million-dollar renovation to convert Schwab Hall into the new home for The Shields School of Business. MacLachlan, Cornelius & Filoni Architects, Inc. of Pittsburgh and general contractor RT Contracting of Duncansville undertook the project, keeping aspects of the original building intact to honor its past.

From the exterior design with its signature "Charles M. Schwab Science Hall" embossed above the front entrance, to the terra-cotta tile on the first floor and the original transom windows above the interior doorways, pieces of the historical building harken back to decades of classes past. Yet these historic touches are blended beautifully with the modern technology needs of a vibrant business curriculum. New building features include a stock ticker, state-of-the-art

classrooms featuring lecture capture technology, open collaborative and lounge spaces for students, a new finance and data analytics computer lab, and a “Vista” room on the top floor perfect for alumni receptions and viewing the Red Flash sports teams at the DeGol sports complex.

Trustee Emerita

Mary Weidlein, of Laughlintown, traces her passion for the arts back to her childhood. At the age of ten, she would participate in Saturday art classes at Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. It was at those classes that she developed a deep appreciation for fine art, the artists who create it, and the museums that display it. As it turns out, those Saturday classes have had a profound effect on the lives of many living in Western Pennsylvania.

A self-described “perennial volunteer,” Weidlein’s passion for the arts and spirit of philanthropy have touched several organizations over the years. While residing outside New York City, she volunteered at the science greenhouse of the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, where she was also a trustee. In the early 1980s, she and her family moved to Ligonier, and her interest in horticulture led her to volunteer one day a week at the Phipps Conservatory in Pittsburgh, where she helped plan, plant and care for an outdoor herb garden.

In 2000, Weidlein began her long relationship with SAMA by volunteering at the new Ligonier museum and joining the Auxiliary. By 2002, she was named to the Board of Trustees and served on its Acquisitions Committee until her retirement last year. Over the years, she has been a driving force behind the Ligonier Museum and the Garden Party, including serving as co-chair of the 10th annual event. In 2013, she was recognized as the Auxiliary’s Distinguished Honoree, the first person to receive the honor.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto is located on the campus of Saint Francis University. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays. The Museum is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.