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For Immediate Release

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Des Moines Art Center Launches 75th Anniversary Campaign with \$5 Million Gift

DES MOINES, IOWA (October 2021) – The Des Moines Art Center has received a \$5 million gift from the late Harriet S. and J. Locke Macomber in support of the Art Center’s 75th Anniversary Campaign. The Harriet S. and J. Locke Macomber Des Moines Art Center Fund is held at the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines and is restricted for the acquisition of art and exhibition-related support.

The Des Moines Art Center’s \$11 million capital campaign will support three major initiatives: enhancing and expanding art access and community programming; completing renovations and improvements within its iconic facilities, and enlarging and enhancing the Art Center’s permanent collection through art acquisitions.

Harriet and Locke Macomber were devoted, long-time supporters of the Des Moines Art Center with a distinguished history of philanthropy, especially for arts and culture organizations. Their philanthropic support can be seen throughout Central Iowa and beyond. J. Locke Macomber died in 1998 and his wife Harriet in 2020. Both Harriet and Locke, along with Harriet’s father, Vincent Starzinger, were former Trustees of the Art Center.

Jeff Fleming, Director of the Des Moines Art Center, said, “This remarkably generous support from the Harriet S. and J. Locke Macomber Fund is a tremendous boost to our efforts. This leadership gift has launched our campaign in the most positive way and has encouraged others to support the campaign as well. We are grateful that Harriet and Locke’s love for the Des Moines Art Center will allow us to further our mission and expand the positive cultural, educational, social, and economic impact on our community. We will be forever grateful to them.”

Honorary Chairs for the 75th-anniversary campaign are John and Mary Pappajohn. Community leaders and Campaign Chairs Pamela Bass-Bookey and Harry Bookey said, “For decades the Des Moines Art Center – the museum, school, and sculpture park – have contributed significantly to the quality of life in Des Moines and Central Iowa. Free admission, arts education, and community outreach are all integral to the Art Center’s mission. We are proud to support and chair this important campaign.”

In recognition of the extraordinary gift, the lobby of the Art Center is now named the Harriet S. and J. Locke Macomber Lobby. For further information, interviews/quotes, or images, please contact Director of Development Tiffany Nagel Spinner.



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Des Moines Art Center + John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center, an AAM-accredited institution, has amassed an important collection of art from the 19th century to the present, with a major emphasis on contemporary art. Focused on quality and global in scope, it includes major works by Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edward Hopper, Georgia O’Keeffe, Francis Bacon, Andy Goldsworthy, Henri Matisse, Wangechi Mutu, Ai Wei Wei and Kara Walker, among hundreds of others. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by a renowned architect—Eliel Saarinen, I. M. Pei and Richard Meier. With the exception of special events, admission to the museum is free.

In September 2009, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park opened in Des Moines’ Western Gateway Park. Philanthropists John and Mary Pappajohn provided funding for and donated 31 sculptures by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists to the Des Moines Art Center. The collection of sculptures by such artists as Martin Puryear, Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Olafur Eliasson, Keith Haring, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Yayoi Kusama, Jaume Plensa, Richard Serra and Joel Shapiro is the most significant donation of artwork to the Art Center in a single gift in the museum’s history. The Pappajohn Sculpture Park is a collaboration of the Pappajohns, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Art Center and numerous corporate and private donors.

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