

# PROFILE

Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery News  
Summer 2001





## From the DIRECTOR

The person (living) with arm outstretched on the cover of this issue of *Profile* appears to be very, very happy. I am. The photograph, caught by a photographer from the *Washington Post* and reproduced on the newspaper's front page, describes a great moment in the life of the National Portrait Gallery, and of the nation it serves. We had just announced a remarkable gift from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation of Nevada, which included the \$20 million necessary to purchase this definitive "Lansdowne" portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart; \$4 million to dedicate a gallery to this great painting in the name of the Foundation; and up to \$6 million to support *George Washington's* tour of America during the Portrait Gallery's renovation. Theirs is an act of generosity and patriotism for which we will be forever grateful.

During my appeal to the nation to find the means to save the painting for the American public in the face of a likely auction, I was asked by Matt Lauer of the *Today* show why a government-supported museum needed to go outside public funding to purchase a national treasure. I answered that the Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian as a whole have always represented a public-private partnership, and in fact, the Institution owes its origin to a remarkable private gift by the visionary James Smithson. The federal government will always guarantee the existence of the Smithsonian, but it is the generosity of donors, individuals, foundations, and corporations that allows us to reach for greatness in representing the best of our society. For that we are, I said, "dependent on the kindness of strangers" (with apologies to Tennessee Williams).

I should have added ". . . and friends," because the National Portrait Gallery continues to benefit from the generosity of longtime supporters no less than those who arrive—as did Fred Smith, the chairman of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation—on a white horse to save the day. Donors long known or recently discovered give us more than money; they give us immense hope for the future of this wonderful museum. It was just over a year ago that Paul Peck of Virginia gave what was the largest gift ever to the NPG to support a series of programs that would build on our great Hall of Presidents to bring the meaning of public responsibility to Americans of all ages. Out of that commitment have come remarkable panel discussions on the presidency to accompany our "Portraits of the Presidents" exhibitions at the Bush and Truman presidential libraries, and will come both an expanded electronic commitment to presidential topics and the Paul Peck Presidential Awards.

When the Gallery first opened in 1968, some wondered if it would ever be able to assemble a great collection. More than three decades later, no one wonders anymore. Time after time, donors have stepped forth to help us acquire what would otherwise have been unattainable. As we raise funds to enrich our collections and programs, restore our great building, initiate a portrait competition, and create educational strategies to inspire young Americans, we will continue to be dependent on your kindness and committed to being worthy of it. ✨

*Marc Packter*

# PROFILE

## Contents

Vol. 2 No. 2. Summer 2001



**Cover:** Thanks to the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, the National Portrait Gallery recently purchased the “Lansdowne” portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart. The donation of up to \$30 million was made public in March and received extensive media coverage. Plans for the national tour of the painting are already under way.

Original photograph by James A. Parcell  
© 2001 *The Washington Post*.  
Reprinted with permission.

**4**  
“Lansdowne”  
Acquisition:  
*George Washington by  
Gilbert Stuart*

**6**  
Strokes of Fortune  
*Collection Stories*

**8**  
Behind the Scenes  
*Gifts, Bequests, and  
Purchases*

**10**  
Q&A  
*Interview with Indian Peace  
Medals Collector Lloyd  
Schermmer*

**12**  
From Exhibition to  
Acquisition

**13**  
Extraordinary Works  
*Some Generous Friends*

**14**  
NPG on the Road  
*Caricatures on View in  
New York City*

**15**  
Two New Paul Peck  
Initiatives Announced

**16**  
Portrait Puzzlers

### In the next issue

- *New acquisition of rare vintage celebrity portraits from the personal archive of photographer Edward Steichen*
- *The dismantling of the painting Grant and His Generals presents a unique challenge for the Portrait Gallery*

## PROFILE



Smithsonian  
*National Portrait Gallery*

National Portrait Gallery  
Smithsonian Institution  
750 Ninth Street, NW  
Suite 8300  
Washington, DC 20560-0973  
Phone: (202) 275-1738  
Fax: (202) 275-1887  
E-mail: [NPGnews@npg.si.edu](mailto:NPGnews@npg.si.edu)  
Web site: [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu)

Readers' comments are welcome.

© 2001 Smithsonian Institution  
Available in alternative formats.  
Printed on recycled paper.

Marc Pachter  
Carolyn K. Carr  
Eloise Baden

**Editor**  
Carol Wyrick

**Review Editor**  
Sidney Hart

**Editorial Committee**  
Anne Christiansen  
Dru Dowdy  
Marianne Gurley  
Leslie London  
Patrick Madden  
Ellen G. Miles  
Frances Stevenson  
Frederick Voss

Director  
Deputy Director and Chief Curator  
Chief Administrative Officer

Office of Education

The Charles Willson Peale  
Family Papers

Office of Public Affairs  
Office of Publications  
Office of Photographic Services  
Office of Design and Production  
Office of External Affairs  
Department of Painting and Sculpture  
Office of Publications  
Department of History

National Portrait Gallery  
Commission  
Barbara Novak, *Chair*  
Anthony C. Beilenson  
Jeannine Smith Clark  
Stephen Jay Gould  
Julie Harris  
David Levering Lewis  
R. W. B. Lewis  
Bette Bao Lord  
Joan A. Mondale  
Robert B. Morgan  
Roger Mudd

*Ex Officio*  
Earl A. Powell III  
William H. Rehnquist  
Lawrence M. Small

# Gallery Acquires Gilbert Stuart’s “Lansdowne” Portrait of George Washington



Ellen G. Miles

CURATOR OF PAINTING  
AND SCULPTURE

Because of the generosity, patriotism, and public-minded spirit of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, the National Portrait Gallery has been able to purchase the original “Lansdowne” portrait of George Washington, by American artist Gilbert Stuart, for \$20 million, the asking price of its English owner. Stuart painted the full-length portrait in 1796 for William Petty, Lord Shelburne, the first Marquis of Lansdowne, a British supporter of the American cause during the Revolution. It was commissioned as a gift by one of America’s wealthiest men, Senator William Bingham, and his wife Anne. Painted in the European tradition of a state, or public, portrait, the work is the first full-length image of Washington as the civic leader of the new United States. Earlier full-length portraits by Charles Willson Peale and John Trumbull had shown Washington in uniform, as the heroic military leader of the American Revolution. Here he is seen in the black velvet suit that he wore on official occasions during his presidency (1789–1797). The portrait’s symbolism clearly indicates that the head of the new republic was a citizen himself, a concept of great importance in the late eighteenth century, the age of revolution.

The Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, based in Las Vegas, is one of the nation’s largest private foundations. Established in 1954 by media entrepreneur Donald W. Reynolds, who died in 1993, the foundation’s national giving initiatives are in the areas of cardiovascular clinical research

*“My fellow trustees and I are excited and proud to be able to play a part in saving this national treasure for the American people.”*

—Fred W. Smith  
Chairman, Donald W. Reynolds Foundation

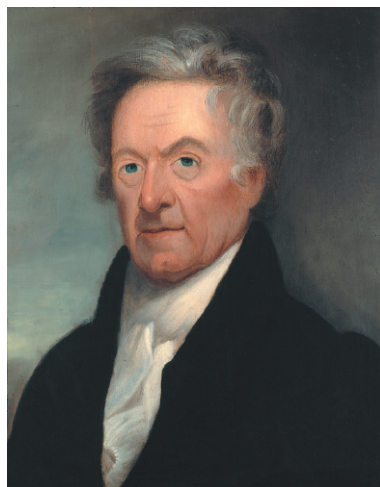
and aging and the quality of life. Its community-service initiatives provide funds for projects in Nevada, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Fred W. Smith, chairman of the board of the foundation, stated at the time of the announcement of the gift in Washington, on March 13, 2001: “My fellow trustees and I are excited and proud to be able to play a part in saving this national treasure for the American people.” A grant of \$4 million from the foundation will fund a dedicated space for the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery when it reopens. Additional funds of up to \$6 million will pay for a national tour for the painting and related educational materials.

In the portrait, Washington is seen in an oratorical pose, his right hand gesturing toward an unseen audience. Much of the imagery refers to the new American republic, including the large books titled *Federalist*, *Journal of Congress*, *American Revolution*, and *Constitution and Laws of the United States*; the oval medallion decorating the back of the armchair, on which is seen a blue horizontal field with thirteen stars positioned above thirteen red and white vertical stripes; the table leg designed to resemble an ancient Roman symbol of politi-

cal unity; and the rainbow in the distance, a symbol of the end of the stormy days of the American Revolution. The Gallery’s painting is the first of three life-size examples of the “Lansdowne” type of composition that are firmly documented as Stuart’s work; the others are owned by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Brooklyn Museum of Art. A small number of additional versions, including one at the White House, are also attributed to Stuart. In 1823 Stuart identified what is now the Gallery’s painting as one of only three separate likenesses of Washington that he painted from life. Of the other two, he wrote that the first was “rubbed out.” The second is the unfinished painting known as the “Athenaeum” portrait because of its century-and-a-half ownership by the Boston Athenaeum. It is now jointly owned by the National Portrait Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The “Lansdowne” portrait was sent to London in the fall of 1796, soon after it was completed. It was displayed in Lansdowne House, the home of the Marquis. The year after the Marquis’s death in 1805, it was purchased by American merchant Samuel Williams at the

sale of the estate. The price was high; sculptor Joseph Nollekens described the painting as having “fetched a great deal more than any modern picture ever brought by auction before.” Williams owned the portrait until 1827, when it was bought by John Delaware Lewis. His son John Delaware Lewis owned it after Lewis Sr.’s death in 1841. Archibald Philip Primrose, fifth Earl of Rosebery, ancestor of the modern English owners, acquired it in 1890. The present (seventh) Earl of Rosebery gave the painting to his son, Lord Harry Dalmeny, who sold it to the Gallery. The portrait was lent by its English owners to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876 and to the George Washington Bicentennial Historical Loan Exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in 1932. The painting returned to the United States in 1968 as a loan to the National Portrait Gallery’s opening exhibition. On view from that time until the closing of the Patent Office Building in January 2000, the portrait is now temporarily on loan to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, and will return as a centerpiece of the reopening of the Patent Office Building, scheduled for 2004. ✨



*Gilbert Stuart by an unidentified artist after Anson Dickinson, circa 1825*



*Gallery Director Marc Pachter, Reynolds Foundation President Steven Anderson, and Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence Small at the “Lansdowne” press conference*



*Donald W. Reynolds, founder, Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, 1954*

# Strokes of Fortune

Margaret C. S. Christman

RESEARCH HISTORIAN

“I am engaged in getting the National Portrait Gallery started, a difficult task in that it is starting at least a hundred years late,” Charles Nagel, the Gallery’s first director, would write over and over again, pointing out that scores of images of those who rightly belonged in a nation’s portrait gallery had long since been ensconced in other institutions. When Nagel arrived in 1964, he found fewer than 200 portraits; today the number has risen to more than 18,000 items. That the Gallery has been able to amass a significant collection is due to a variety of factors—hard work and generous donors, of course—but not to be forgotten is lady luck.

Fate has often been kind to the National Portrait Gallery, but sometimes with an unkind twist. Such was the case in 1967, when a Washington woman brought in a painting she had inherited, and Curator Robert Stewart identified it as a portrait of Revolutionary War general Horatio Gates painted by James Peale. “My family and I are numb with the unexpected pleasure of sharing in the discovery,” the owner wrote to Nagel. “Upon realizing its potential monetary value and

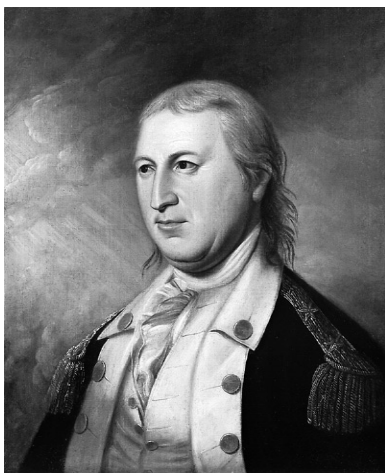
its place in the pictorial history of our nation,” she had returned the portrait to the lawyer handling the estate. Nagel at once made known the Gallery’s interest in purchasing the portrait, but subsequently heard—to his astonishment and indignation—that without the courtesy of a first refusal, it had been sold to a New York dealer. Two years later, after the picture had changed hands and lost its original frame, the Gallery was able to consummate the purchase.

On another occasion, fate intervened with a happy outcome. In 1969 Augustus John’s portrait of legendary actress Tallulah Bankhead was put up for auction. Members of the Portrait Gallery Commission (who have the responsibility for approving all acquisitions) were polled and agreed that the Gallery should venture a modest bid out of its small acquisition budget. The Gallery, however, was outbid by philanthropist John Hay Whitney. But just a few days later, Whitney remarked to National Gallery of Art director and ex-officio Gallery commissioner John Walker that he and his wife knew that Bankhead longed to have the painting “hanging after her death with a collection open to the public or in a museum where the theater

was imaginatively presented. . . . It seems to us that this would be just the right place for the painting.” On June 30, 1969, Charles Nagel’s final day as director, the portrait was delivered to the Gallery and hailed in the press as “a gorgeous vision in pastel pink negligee, and perhaps the symbol of a museum that is joining the 20th Century.”

A plaster bust labeled “portrait of an unknown gentleman” came up for sale at a Washington auction in February 1978. Marvin Sadik, the Gallery’s second director, saw at once that the subject was the preeminent nineteenth-century educator Horace Mann, and sent a member of the staff to bid on it incognito. Mann was added to the collection at a cost of \$100. The bust, signed by Boston sculptor Thomas A. Carew and dated 1852, was unveiled on May 6, 1978, at a ceremony celebrating the creation of the Department of Education.

One factor in the Gallery’s good fortune over the years has been a little help from its friends. Mrs. Arthur Hays Sulzberger, of the *New York Times* publishing family, told Marvin Sadik that she hoped the Gallery would acquire a portrait of public health pioneer Lillian Wald. Sadik responded that he would



Horatio Gates by James Peale, circa 1782; partial gift of Lawrence A. Fleischman



Horace Mann by Thomas A. Carew, 1852



Tallulah Bankhead (detail) by Augustus John, 1930; gift of the Hon. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney © Estate of Augustus John



*Willard Libby (detail) by Alvin Gittins, 1968; gift of Mrs. Willard F. Libby*



*Lillian Wald by William V. Schevill, 1919; gift of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York*



*Marilyn Monroe (detail) by David D. Geary, 1954; gift of David D. Geary*

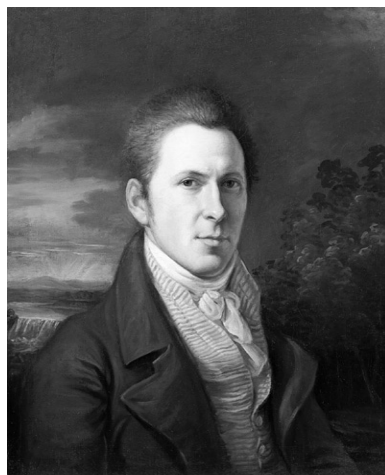
be grateful indeed if she could help find an available life portrait. Mrs. Sulzberger discovered that the Visiting Nurse Service in New York had a portrait of Wald in their headquarters that they would very much like to give to the Gallery. It turned out to be a fine oil painting by William Valentine Schevill, an American artist trained in Munich.

Because of something, or someone, she heard on Larry King's talk show of January 2, 1982, the widow of the Nobel Prize-winning chemist Willard Libby was prompted to ask if the Smithsonian would like to have the portrait of Libby painted by Alvin Gittins of the University of Utah. The Gallery, eager to strengthen its representation of scientists, was pleased to have the gift. In responding to staff questions about accessories in the painting, Dr. Leona Marshall Libby explained that the skull seen on the table had been brought in by her husband's colleagues at UCLA just as the artist was putting the final touches on the canvas. "I guess they thought it reminded the viewer of Bill's most famous invention, radio-carbon dating, which has given us enormous amounts of information [on] how human-kind developed in the last 50,000 years."

Off the street came Dave Geary with a series of 35-mm transparencies he had taken of sex symbol Marilyn Monroe as she entertained American troops

in Korea in February 1954. Geary, then a navy medic, came to the concert with his new Argus camera. As he hunted for a seat, Geary related, someone called out, "Hey doc, c'mere," and I ended up in the second row, with a beautiful angle onto the stage." The intimate photographs, Geary realized, had a historic importance, but he was at a loss as to what he should do about them. "One day I asked the guys, 'What can I do with these pictures?' They said, 'Send them to the Smithsonian Institute [sic]!' 'Oh boy! I never thought of that!'" And so he donated them to the National Portrait Gallery in 1997.

Apprised by a docent of an unrecorded Rembrandt Peale self-portrait in Rocky River, Ohio,



*Rembrandt Peale by Charles Willson Peale, 1818; gift of Donald Hamilton Workman, in memory of his father, James Clark Workman, and his grandfather, James Henry Workman*

Robert Stewart wrote to the owner, Donald Hamilton Workman, requesting a photograph. When it came, it was apparent that the painting was not a self-portrait, but rather the previously unlocated Charles Willson Peale portrait of Rembrandt, known only through the elder Peale's letter of August 9, 1818. "But your portrait has undergone an important change," Peale wrote to his son, detailing that on the side "I have made a thick wood" and going on to describe "the warm horizon and distant mountain, and in the middle distance below a river and cascade." Workman soon told the Gallery that his wife and son agreed that the portrait "should be hung where it will be properly cared for and enjoyed by many. It no longer belongs in anyone's living room." He donated the portrait in 1982, in memory of his father and grandfather.

Portraits in search of a good home have made their way to the Gallery over the years. One such was a portrait of artist Horace Pippin, who posed for seventeen-year-old Tom Bostelle in 1939. Some six years later, Bostelle gave the portrait to the Levi Hood Lodge of the International Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of West Chester, Pennsylvania, and it dropped from sight for nearly thirty years. Located by West Chester detective Carl

*Continued on page 14*

# Behind the Scenes: Gifts, Bequests, and Purchases

Ellen G. Miles

CURATOR OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

The National Portrait Gallery is a museum of American history that uses portraits to represent the individuals who contributed to that history. The portraits in the collections—whether paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, or photographs—are acquired because of the person they represent. Possible acquisitions come to our attention in many ways. Sometimes dealers offer them, and some are discovered in auction catalogues. Very often descendants of the subjects or of the artists bring them to us for consideration. Because there are few collectors of historical portraits, our search for important images often takes us in directions that differ from those of an art museum.

We are a relatively young museum, and have learned to be bold in expressing our interest in portraits, especially rare or unusual ones. A portrait of Thomas Jefferson painted by American artist Mather Brown was one of the few portraits of Jefferson that was still privately owned when the Gallery opened in 1968. It is the earliest known image of Jefferson, showing him in 1786, at the age of forty-three, when he served as America's minister plenipotentiary to the Court of Versailles. Painted for John Adams in London, it belonged to successive members of the Adams family. With his powdered hair and elegant clothes, Jefferson looks young and European. In the background is a small statue that represents Liberty. The Gallery borrowed the painting for its opening exhibition, "This New Man," and for several other exhibitions. On each occasion, the Gallery's current director expressed to the owner a serious interest in having a good life portrait of Jefferson. As is often true with portraits of very well known historical figures, its owner, Charles Francis Adams, realized that it belonged in a place where it would be seen by the public, and bequeathed it to the Gallery.

Expressing an interest in having a good portrait of a major historical figure also led to the acquisition of the profile watercolor of Benjamin Franklin made by French artist Louis Carrogis de Carmontelle in Paris in 1780 or early 1781. It had belonged to President Herbert Hoover since 1928, and to his daughter-in-law after his death in 1964. When director Marvin Sadik wrote to Herbert Hoover III that the Gallery would be a very good home for the rare, full-figure image of Franklin, the family was not ready to part with the watercolor. At the death of Mrs. Hoover, the Gallery was notified that she had made a bequest of the watercolor in her will; her son presented the watercolor to the Gallery in 1982.

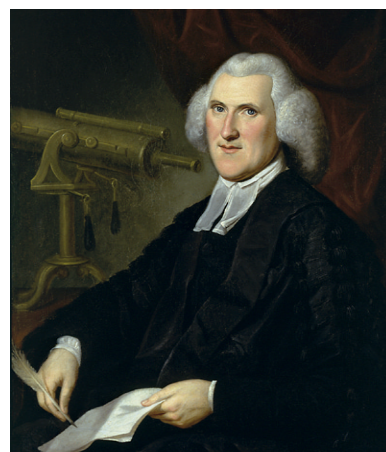
By contrast, some of our most interesting acquisitions develop out of the research of Gallery staff. Charles Willson Peale's 1788 portrait of John Ewing came to the attention of Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture Brandon Fortune as she researched themes for her exhibition "Franklin & His Friends: Portraying the Man of Science in Eighteenth-Century America," held at the Gallery in 1999. Peale, a naturalist himself, has given us a rare portrayal of an eighteenth-century natural philosopher (as scientists were termed). He has indicated Ewing's special interest in astronomy in the background by including a Gregorian reflecting telescope of the type made in London.



*Thomas Jefferson by Mather Brown, 1786; bequest of Charles Francis Adams*



*Benjamin Franklin by Louis Carrogis de Carmontelle, circa 1780–1781; bequest of Mrs. Herbert Clark Hoover*



*John Ewing by Charles Willson Peale, 1788; partial gift of Dean Emerson and Maisie Emerson Macy*



This portrait comes to the Gallery as a donative sale, the term for an arrangement in which the owner sells a portion of the portrait to the Gallery and donates the remaining value.

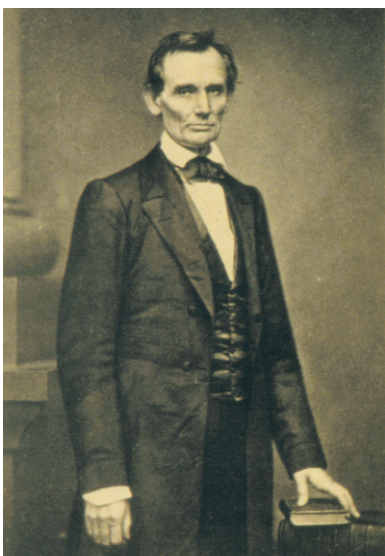
Isamu Noguchi's 1942 pink-marble head of film star Ginger Rogers also came to our attention through the research of a staff member. Gallery historian Amy Henderson noticed the portrait in the actress's home when she consulted Rogers while doing research for "Red, Hot & Blue," the exhibition about American musicals that was held at the Gallery in 1996–1997. The Gallery purchased the portrait from the Ginger Rogers Trust after Rogers's death in 1995.

Curator of Photographs Ann Shumard was on the lookout for images by photographer Mathew Brady when she located an example of his rare portrait of Abraham Lincoln. The photograph, taken in New York City on February 27, 1860, shows a beardless Lincoln months before his election as President. It is in the form of a *carte de visite*—a small card-mounted photograph equal in size to European calling cards—a format that enjoyed enormous popularity during the 1860s. Another acquisition came about because of her research on African American daguerreotypist Augustus Washington. She regularly studies auction catalogues of material relating to African American history, and in one, she noted a rare lithograph of the Reverend Morris Brown, second bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The print was made by deaf-mute lithographer Albert Newsam in 1844 in Philadelphia. Curator of Prints and Drawings Wendy Wick Reaves recognized the importance of the print as one of a series of early-nineteenth-century images of African American religious leaders.

Adding to the Gallery's collections has been successful because our mission is very specific: to collect portraits of people who made contributions to the history and culture of the United States. Gifts and bequests of important portraits boost our visibility, and in many cases we are collecting in areas that are otherwise not well known or in demand. At the same time, the increased prices of American art have at times meant that significant portraits have gone elsewhere, especially in recent years. Still, we have built a collection of very fine, historically important and artistically interesting portraits in a short period, and have shown how portraiture can convey a sense of the sitter's life and times quite forcefully. ✨

### How does the process of acquisitions work at the National Portrait Gallery?

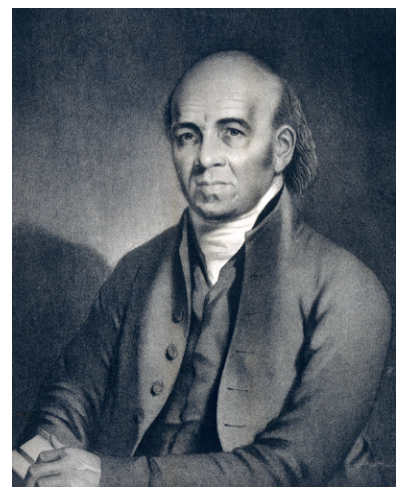
When a portrait is considered for acquisition, the initial review by the historians and the director is based on the biography of the subject. At the same time, curators determine the circumstances under which the portrait was made, acquiring portraits done from life when possible. The first formal test of a portrait's chances occurs at the regularly scheduled curatorial meetings, when the historians and curators debate the historical and aesthetic qualities of proposed acquisitions. With the approval of the committee, the curators arrange to bring the portrait to the Gallery, and they present it to the Gallery's Commission at one of its twice-yearly meetings. The Commission has final authority to approve the subject of the portrait for the collection, and thus to admit the portrait to the collection.



*Abraham Lincoln by Mathew Brady, 1860*



*Ginger Rogers by Isamu Noguchi, 1942 © Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Inc., New York*



*The Reverend Morris Brown (detail) by Albert Newsam, after John Neagle, 1844*



## From Arrowheads to Peace Medals



*Retired journalist and news publisher Lloyd Schermer has been a loyal friend to the Smithsonian for many years and in many ways. From 1991 to 1994, he chaired the Smithsonian's National Board, and among his gifts have been the funds to refurbish one of the magnificent public halls in the Smithsonian's original building, known as the Castle. Appropriately enough, that hall was the site of the recent exhibition of his collection of Indian peace medals, which he and his wife donated to the National Portrait Gallery in 1999, along with a three-volume set of The History of the Indian Tribes of North America by Thomas McKenney and James Hall.*

*National Portrait Gallery benefactor Lloyd Schermer talks with the Gallery's Senior Historian Frederick Voss about how he became interested in collecting these rare items that are so evocative of Native American life and culture of the nineteenth century.*

**Frederick Voss:** When did you get your first urge to be a collector?

**Lloyd Schermer:** I grew up in a little town in Illinois named Granite City, which is right by the Cahokia Indian Mounds, across the river from Saint Louis, Missouri. These mounds dated back thousands of years, and the dirt for them had been brought up the Mississippi from farther south. A neighbor and his son would regularly go out looking for Indian relics in that area and actually found a good many, and I must have gotten the collecting impulse from them. When farmers would plow their fields right after a rainstorm, we would walk out over the black soil and look for anything that shined in the sun. We found a lot of arrowheads and lance heads that way. But I also remember going to summer camp up in northern Wisconsin when I was about nine and having a counselor who was a full-blooded Cherokee from Oklahoma. He made his own native costumes and taught us Indian dancing and lore. This was very impressive to a little kid, and I think I owe a lot of my interest in Indian objects to him.

**Voss:** How did this collecting interest resurface in adulthood?

**Schermer:** My wife Betty and I were down in New Orleans in the 1950s. We went into a print shop and saw some of those wonderful hand-colored lithograph portraits taken from [Thomas] McKenney and [James] Hall's *Indian Tribes of North America*, which was published in the 1830s. They were just so beautiful and wonderfully done, and we could afford them! In those days you could buy one for two dollars. Since then the prices of those prints have grown exponentially, and today you'd have to pay many, many times that. So from that moment nearly fifty years ago, we started picking up the McKenney-Hall images wherever we could find them. And eventually, we were lucky enough to find the three original volumes of McKenney-Hall with all the portraits and the biographical texts about their subjects pristinely intact.

**Voss:** And where did the Indian peace medals come in?

**Schermer:** You might say it was a chain reaction. In many of the McKenney-Hall portraits, the Indian subjects were wearing these medallions strung around their necks, bearing likenesses of American Presidents. I became curious about them and found that the idea for the medals went back to the British and French, and that federal government agents presented them to Indian chiefs and warriors to curry their favor and goodwill. They became great symbols of prestige for whoever received them, and I began to think, "Gee, wouldn't it

be interesting to own one of these medals.” I called a dealer in New Hampshire, who bid on one for me at an auction. I think it was the Jefferson medal. At any rate, I was started on another collection, and eventually I wound up with nineteen of the medals.

**Voss:** There are some pitfalls to watch for in collecting these medals, aren't there?

**Schermer:** There are lots of counterfeits of these medals out there. The person who put me on to that fact was Barber Conable, a Smithsonian Regent, who has collected some medals himself. “Be very careful,” he said. One way to authenticate a medal is to do a spectograph test to see if the alloy in the silver medal matches what was used back when the medal was supposed to have been made.

**Voss:** How do you feel now that your McKenney-Hall images and medals have gone to the National Portrait Gallery? Do you feel a little naked without them?

**Schermer:** No, and I'll tell you why. The books are very rare. When you open one up, you've got to be so careful. Friends come over and they want to look at them, and you get a little queasy about showing them. With the medals, they became so valuable that we put them in a safe-deposit box. Why stash something like that away when people could enjoy seeing them? Frankly, I was delighted when your [former] director Alan Fern said he wanted them for the Gallery. Putting the collection together, and then having it where I know people are going to see it—in an environment that connects it to history—I think it's great.

**Voss:** Do you still have the collector's instinct?

**Schermer:** I've gotten into making monotype prints, and I'm more interested in that these days. I was in the newspaper business all my life, and I'm using a lot of type that's become obsolete—the wood type and the foundry type—to make these monotypes. But I'm still a bit of a pack rat. They were tearing down an old building below where we live in Aspen. There were two beautifully weathered old shutters hanging on the exterior, and they were going to the dump with everything else. I said, “Can I have those?” They said sure. I put the shutters in my garage three years ago, but I had no idea what to do with them. Suddenly, as a matter of fact, yesterday, I was skiing. I was skiing down one of the slopes, and it dawned on me that I could use the shutters as the background for a print.

**Voss:** So, you do still collect. It just sometimes takes you awhile to know why.

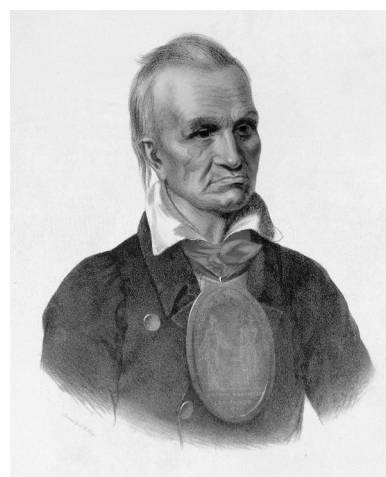
**Schermer:** I guess so. ✨



*Mr. and Mrs. Schermer at the opening reception for “Indian Peace Medals” at the Smithsonian Castle*

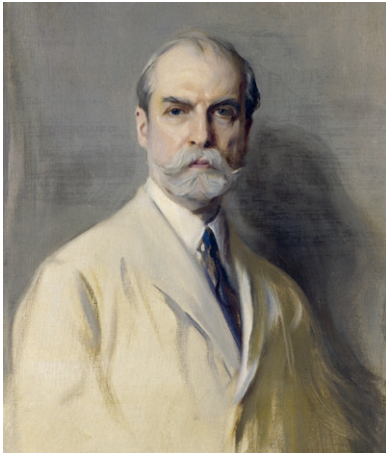


*Thomas Jefferson peace medal (obverse) by John Reich*



*Seneca leader Sagoyewatha or “Red Jacket” (detail) by Albert Newsam, after Charles Bird King, 1834*

# From Exhibition to Acquisition



*Charles Evans Hughes by Philip de Lászlo, 1921; bequest of Chauncey L. Waddell*



*Frank O'Hara by Alice Neel, 1960; gift of Hartley S. Neel  
© Estate of Alice Neel*



*Mary Martin by Philippe Halsman, 1949; gift of Jane Halsman Bello  
© Halsman Estate*

## Beverly J. Cox

DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITIONS AND COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

When the National Portrait Gallery opened to the public in 1968, then-Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley wrote in his foreword to the inaugural catalogue that the founding of the museum at that time was “an act of bravery indeed.” American portraiture had, he said, “reached the zenith in price and the nadir in supply.” Most of the portraits of famous people were already in museums; those that were still privately owned were very unlikely to be left to this “johnny-come-lately.”

Staff historians had put together a list of some 450 important figures in American history who they hoped would one day be represented in the museum, but hampered by a scarcity of money for acquisitions and the Gallery’s late arrival on the scene, they had very little hope of reaching that goal. Somehow, private owners had to be convinced to donate their portraits. To his credit, Charles Nagel, the Gallery’s first director, understood that an active exhibition program could be just the mechanism for making that possible. Loans to exhibitions could translate into acquisitions for the museum.

The Gallery opened with an ambitious exhibition organized around the theme of Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur’s 1782 question, “What then is the American, this new man?” The show included nearly 170 portraits, only 35 of which belonged to the Gallery. The exhibition was, said Nagel, “to give an idea of what we’re aiming at, not of what we have.” Today nearly all of the individuals included in that exhibition are represented in the Gallery, many by the same portraits that were originally lent. Some came as gifts or bequests: Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes by Philip de Lászlo, abolitionist Lucretia Mott by Joseph Kyle, and composer John Philip Sousa by Harry Waltham. Others were purchases, including a portrait of the first Speaker of the House of Representatives, Frederick A. C. Muhlenburg, and John Singleton Copley’s glorious self-portrait. Some took many years to acquire: the portrait of William Lloyd Garrison by Nathaniel Jocelyn was a bequest received twenty-eight years after its inclusion in “This New Man.”

The Gallery’s exhibition of presidential portraits has been one of its most-visited attractions. For its inaugural opening, however, it was necessary to borrow sixteen images of the then-thirty-five Presidents. Six of those paintings have now entered the collection, including one of the Gallery’s best-loved portraits, Franklin Roosevelt by Douglas Chandor.

From 1968 until its temporary closing in 2000, the Gallery has mounted more than two hundred loan exhibitions, many of which have resulted in acquisitions. From one exhibition alone, “Portraits of the American Stage, 1771–1971,” we have acquired thirteen portraits. The acquisitions have been as varied as our exhibition program: a 1986 exhibition on Davy Crockett brought us the long-term loan and future bequest of a life portrait of the frontiersman by Chester Harding; from “Champions of American Sport” in 1983, we acquired one of the Gallery’s most popular portraits, a full-length sculpture of Casey Stengel. “Red, Hot & Blue: A Salute to American Musicals” led to the gift of a Philippe Halsman photograph of Mary Martin in *South Pacific*, and the portrait of Frank O’Hara by Alice Neel was given to us by the artist’s estate after it was included in “Rebels: Painters and Poets of the 1950s.” While there has never been a count to see just how many acquisitions have come to us after having been included in an exhibition, there is no question that the Gallery’s shows have brought new images to the museum’s attention and have increased the interest of both artists and donors in placing portraits here. ✨

# Generous Donors Help Add Extraordinary Works

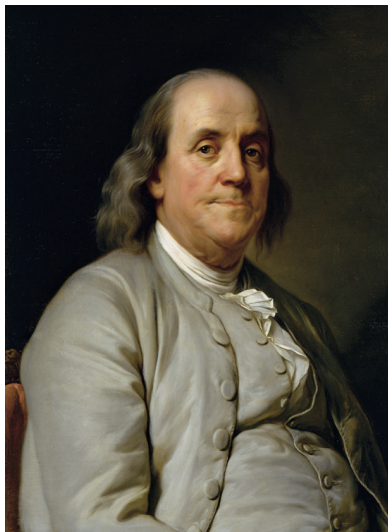
**Patrick M. Madden**

DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Most Portrait Gallery curators would agree that acquisitions have a way of taking unusual twists and turns. As a portrait draws closer to the Commission's final vote, its fate often hangs on the cost of the work. While the Gallery has been exceptionally successful over the years in navigating its limited acquisitions funds, there have been occasions when curators needed to find creative solutions to surmount

this barrier, such as fashioning a donative sale arrangement or finding multiple donors to support the expense. For major acquisitions, the Gallery traditionally depends on generous individuals and foundations when additional Smithsonian endowment funds are not available, but in rare cases it even takes an act of Congress for an object to join the ranks of the collection. The acquisitions highlighted below took extraordinary resources and staff efforts to join the Gallery's album of great Americans.

In 1987, the Gallery learned that a portrait of Benjamin Franklin was available for purchase from a French descendant of a close friend of Franklin. Deputy Director Carolyn Carr traveled to France to verify the authenticity and quality of the portrait. She was immediately impressed by its beauty and condition, and confirmed the museum's interest in having it in the collection. The Gallery approached the trustees of the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, who also recognized the significance of the image and granted funds to purchase the work. This portrait gained fame recently when it was selected as the image for the new one-hundred-dollar bill.



*Benjamin Franklin by Joseph Siffred Duplessis, circa 1785; gift of The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation*



*Self-portrait by John Singleton Copley, 1780–1784; gift of The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation*

The Copley self-portrait is “the single greatest acquisition in the history of the Gallery,” museum director Marvin Sadik proudly triumphed in 1977. Sadik had kept a careful eye on the painting throughout his tenure, but it garnered more of his attention when the museum was planning an exhibition that would include the Copley image. During that time the curators learned that the portrait was for sale, and Sadik knew that this was the moment for it to become part of the collection. The generosity of the Washington, D.C.–based Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, coupled with matching monies from the Smithsonian's trust funds, made it possible for the Gallery to acquire the work. Because of Copley's significance, the Gallery has used his self-portrait on the John Singleton Copley Medal, the highest honor it can bestow on an individual.

The Gallery's Meserve Collection, which includes the famous “cracked-plate” portrait of Abraham Lincoln and more than 5,400 original Mathew Brady negatives, is a remarkable pictorial index of the prominent figures of the Civil War era. The objects comprising the Gallery's Meserve holdings were acquired from amateur historian Frederick Hill Meserve's heirs, with the assistance of the United States Congress. Legislation sponsored by Senator Barry Goldwater, a Smithsonian Regent, and signed into law by President Reagan as part of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, granted the estate of Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt a credit to offset its federal estate-tax obligation. This action paved the way for the Gallery's purchase of the Meserve collection, which remains the largest collection acquired in the museum's history. ✨



*Mary Todd Lincoln by the Mathew Brady Studio, 1862, from the Meserve Collection*

# NPG on the Road

---

Dallas, Texas

**The Women's Museum:  
An Institute for the Future\***

Fifty painted and sculpted portraits of nationally significant women from the collection will be on view through September 2001.

New York City

**New York Public Library**

"Celebrity Caricature in America" contains more than two hundred objects, featuring drawings and artifacts ranging from a puppet to a silk frock. Early twentieth-century figures such as Martha Graham, Irving Berlin, Mae West, and Babe Ruth are illustrated in works by such artists as Miguel Covarrubias, Will Cotton, and Paolo Garretto. On view June 23 through August 31, 2001.

\**Smithsonian Affiliate Museum*

Richmond, Virginia

**The Virginia Historical Society**

Thirty-three paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs of important Virginians, including Arthur Ashe, Ella Fitzgerald, Robert E. Lee, and Martha Washington, are on view through January 2003.



*Mae West by Miguel Covarrubias, circa 1928*

London, England

**National Portrait Gallery**

From the 1940s through the 1970s, Philippe Halsman's portraits appeared on the covers and in the pages of major picture magazines, such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Life*. Opened in D.C. in 1999, "Philippe Halsman: A Retrospective" began its international tour at the NPG in London on May 23. On view through September 2, the exhibition then travels to Paris. The more than seventy original Halsman portraits include Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

Arlington, Texas

**Legends of the Game Museum\***

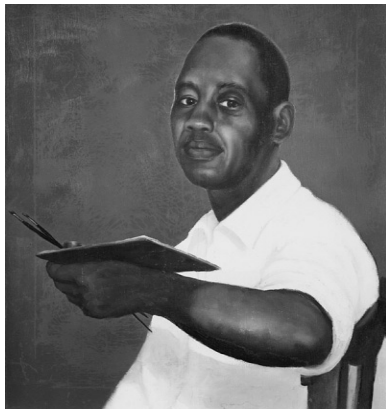
Twelve portraits of baseball immortals will remain on view through January 2003.

---

## Strokes of Fortune *Continued from page 7*

Durnell, it was kept in the police lockup room until Bostelle borrowed it for his portrait retrospective in 1977. Afterward, the lodge sought to make the painting accessible to the public, and Durnell, who was also an official of the lodge, was instrumental in offering it as a gift to the Gallery.

Under the heading of "some things take a while" is the story

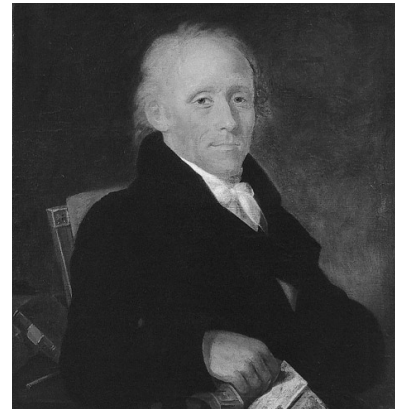


*Horace Pippin (detail) by Tom Bostelle, 1939; gift of the Levi Hood Lodge of the International Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, West Chester, Pennsylvania*

of the Gallery's acquisition of the portrait of George Washington's biographer, Parson Mason Locke Weems. In 1968, Margaret E. Cubbedge saw the notice of the appointment of Helen Fede (whom she had known when she was the librarian at Mount Vernon) as keeper of the Portrait Gallery's Catalog of American Portraits, and wrote to her about the portrait of Weems owned by her nephew in Denver, Dr. Charles E. Weems. Sadly, Mrs. Fede died within weeks of her arrival at the Gallery, but Robert Stewart immediately contacted Dr. Weems, who was agreeable to a "more or less permanent loan." Twenty-seven years later, in 1995, Dr. Weems and his brother Benjamin F. Weems jointly presented the portrait to the Gallery.

In moments of pessimism during the early years of the Gallery, some people talked of

being forced to resort to copies, reproductions, and dioramas. But success in the acquisition of creditable—in fact often outstanding—portraits of eminent Americans during the ensuing decades has removed every doubt. As the Gallery moves into the twenty-first century, we look forward to the surprises that are sure to lie ahead. ✨



*Mason Locke Weems (detail) by an unidentified artist, circa 1810; gift of the Weems family*

# Two New Paul Peck Initiatives Announced



NPG benefactor Paul Peck recently announced an additional \$1 million gift to the Gallery, as well as two new program initiatives: presidential awards and a presidential Web portal. The awards will be presented annually beginning next spring. Honorees will be selected from the following

areas: presidential service; journalists covering the presidency; and presidential biographers, portraitists, or scholars. "The presidency has been a cornerstone of the gallery since its inception," says Marc Pachter. "These awards allow us to celebrate individuals who have worked to further its meaning."

---

## Portrait of a Nation Tour Itinerary



### *Portraits of the Presidents*

Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
June 22–September 23, 2001

Additional venues include: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, Simi Valley, California; Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, Tennessee; North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh; Virginia Historical Society, Richmond

### *A Brush with History*

The National Museum of Western Art  
Tokyo, Japan  
August 6–October 14, 2001

Additional venues include: The Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky; Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Alabama; New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana; National Portrait Gallery, London, England

### *Eye Contact:*

#### *Modern American Portrait Drawings*

Exhibition venues, beginning in May 2002, include: Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

#### *Women of Our Time*

Exhibition venues, beginning in September 2002, include: Old State House, Hartford, Connecticut; Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma; Mobile Museum of Art, Alabama; Sioux City Art Center, Iowa

---

*For information on available bookings, contact the Department of Exhibitions and Collections Management at (202) 275-1777; fax: (202) 275-1897.*

---

**Visit [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu) today!**

## Useful Contacts

*We've moved! Because of the Old Patent Office Building renovation, the staff has moved to its new location at 750 Ninth Street, NW, Suite 8300, Washington, DC 20560-0973. Our new main telephone number is (202) 275-1738; our E-mail addresses remain the same. New contact information is also posted on our Web site.*

### Catalog of American Portraits

Phone: (202) 275-1840  
Web: [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu) and click on Search  
E-mail: [npgweb@npg.si.edu](mailto:npgweb@npg.si.edu)

### Library

Phone: (202) 275-1912  
Web: [www.siris.si.edu](http://www.siris.si.edu) (for the library's catalog)  
E-mail: [LynaghP@sil.si.edu](mailto:LynaghP@sil.si.edu)

### Office of Conservation

*Conservation consultations are available Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., by appointment only. For painting and sculpture ask for CindyLou Molnar; for art on paper and photographs ask for Rosemary Fallon or Emily Jacobson.*

Phone: (202) 357-2685

### Office of External Affairs

Phone: (202) 275-1764  
E-mail: [maddenp@npg.si.edu](mailto:maddenp@npg.si.edu)

### Office of Education

*For information about school and community programs, teacher resources, internships, and upcoming events:*

Phone: (202) 275-1814  
Web: [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu) and click on Education  
E-mail: [Scheduler@npg.si.edu](mailto:Scheduler@npg.si.edu)

### Office of Rights and Reproductions

Phone: (202) 275-1791  
Web: [www.npg.si.edu/inf/r&cr/index-intro.htm](http://www.npg.si.edu/inf/r&cr/index-intro.htm)

### Office of Publications

*To order an NPG publication, contact the National Museum of American History's Shop.*

Phone: (202) 357-1527  
Web: [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu) and click on Information

# Portrait Puzzlers

Using these clues, can you connect names to these faces? Answers below.

1.



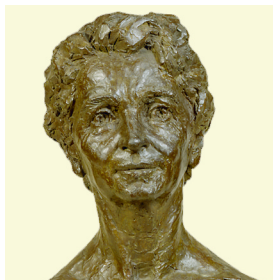
This midwestern poet called Chicago the “city of the big shoulders” and said that the fog came on “little cat feet.”

2.



He looks quite different here from the doleful, comic character with which his name was synonymous in the silent-screen era.

3.



America’s foremost pioneer in the advocacy of birth control, she was once widely regarded as a threat to public decency. Her activism at one point even earned her a prison term.

4.



He wanted to be known as a painter, but he was ultimately far more famous as an inventor and revolutionizer of communication.

1. Carl Sandburg (1878-1967), oil on canvas by William A. Smith, 1961; gift of the Kent-Lucas Foundation. 2. Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977), photograph by Edward Steichen, 1925; bequest of Edward Steichen. 3. Margaret Sanger (1879-1966), bronze by Joy Buba, 1964; gift of Mrs. Cordelia Scarfe May. 4. Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872), self-portrait, oil on millboard, 1812; purchase made possible by a contribution from the James Smithsonian Society. All images are details.

## NPG News Item: New Acquisition

Gallery director Marc Pachter recently announced the acquisition of a portrait of Andrew Taylor Still, which was donated by the Still National Osteopathic Museum. A pioneer of medicine in the United States in the late nineteenth century, Still performed innovative work that led to the founding of the American School of Osteopathic Medicine in Kirksville, Missouri, in 1892. The school, now known as the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, is one of nineteen such schools in the United States. Missouri Senator Jean Carnahan and leaders of the osteopathic medicine community, including students and faculty members from Kirksville College, attended a special reception in Washington on April 26, 2001, to celebrate the Gallery’s acquisition.



James J. McGovern, president, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, Marc Pachter, Senator Jean Carnahan, and Harold Thomas, chairman, KCOM Board of Trustees



Smithsonian  
National Portrait Gallery

Washington DC 20560-0973  
Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use \$300

Return Service  
Requested

Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Smithsonian Institution  
G-94