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SAMA BOARD PRESIDENT LOOKS TO MUSEUM'S FUTURE

Loretto – An early interest in architecture helped build a lifelong love for the arts in the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art's new Board of Trustees President, Jim Cayce. A SAMA Trustee since 2012, Cayce, of Hollidaysburg, was elected to a two-year term that began January 1.

“Growing up in Dayton, Ohio, my first interest in art was marveling over the fabulous architecture that existed in the area, whether it be that iconic – in my seven year-old mind – downtown Art Deco skyscraper, the Italian Renaissance-inspired Dayton Art Institute, or the gothic revival architecture of a local church we passed on our way downtown,” he said. “I love the architecture of a museum as much or more than the art inside.”

Cayce earned a bachelor's degree and J.D. from Mercer University before serving as an officer in the Army. After several years, he began practicing law in Orlando, Florida, in 1973. Later that year, he accepted a position with the US Army Corps of Engineers as an Attorney-Advisor, a position he held until 1988 when he joined the General Services Administration as the Administrator's Director of Government-wide Real Property Policy. By the mid-'90s, he had joined the Department of Energy (DOE) to head its Real Estate program. In that position, he had direct responsibility for the management and execution of DOE's real property holdings, its real property information management system, and oversight of the Department's facility maintenance management program.

Cayce was able to pursue his appreciation for the arts more extensively upon his retirement and subsequent move to the Altoona area in the early 2000s. Within a year of moving to the region, he had become active with SAMA, first serving on the Altoona Museum's fashion show fundraiser committee. He chaired the event in 2005 and 2006, co-chaired in 2010 and '11, and also has been a long-time sponsor of the event. He has been a member of the Gala committee since 2004 and has been a patron and served as co-chair or on the Leadership Circle every year since 2012.

According to Cayce, museums and the arts play an integral role in society. “Without the arts, and I mean the arts in all its forms, I think we would lead a bleak

existence,” he said. “And art isn’t just a framed piece on a wall, or a sculpture in a sculpture garden. It’s also that incredible 1953 Buick Skylark convertible that was part of Harley Earl’s General Motors legacy.

“Likewise, SAMA isn’t just a collection of over 4,500 works of art. It is a dynamic service provider of in-school Arts-in-Education and Artist-in-Residence programs, Museum/Healthcare Partnership programs, student art exhibition programs, and a whole host of other activities that simply would not exist in our area were it not for SAMA.”

As President, Cayce listed enhancing and perpetuating SAMA’s influence and visibility in the arts community as a major goal. So, too, is reaching out to a new donor base.

“There seems to be, in my opinion, a generational divide on the notion of philanthropy, no matter what the level of giving might be,” said Cayce, who has also served as President of the Blairmont Club’s Board of Directors from 2008 through 2011. “While SAMA is extremely fortunate and grateful to receive grant funding from several large Pennsylvania-based foundations and other foundations throughout the country, we need to stimulate individual giving at all levels to support our operational requirements.”

There are already promising developments in that regard, however.

“In support of increasing our funding, I’m happy to note that Nancy Devorris has been named Vice President for Development. Her proven track record of fund-raising will go far in increasing the Museum’s endowment and securing SAMA’s future.”