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GALA TO FEATURE AN “AFRICAN ODYSSEY”

Loretto – Guests at the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto’s 37th annual Gala this summer will be in for a wild time. On Saturday, July 18, the Museum will bring the sights and sounds of Africa to the Saint Francis University campus for “African Odyssey.” The event will offer a variety of games, live entertainment, silent and live auctions, and fabulous specialty bars.

Under the tent, guests will be dazzled by vibrant Zulu-themed decorations while tables are adorned with animal pattern fabrics and African-inspired centerpieces. Perhaps the most powerful decorations will be the life-sized, erected fiberglass skeletons of a stegodon and a woolly rhinoceros on view inside the Museum. Donated by Treasures of the Earth, the two replica skeletons are being featured in the Gala auctions.

Music for the evening will be provided by Quintessence. The Altoona theatre company P&J Productions will sponsor costumed dancers from the Cambria Dance Academy under the direction of choreographer Emily Volpe. Guests are encouraged to add to the ambience with the dress code, “Go Wild!”

“The dress for this year’s Gala says it all – *Go Wild*,” said Jim Cayce, a member of the Gala Leadership Circle. “Visitors will have the opportunity to feast on our always fabulous raw bar, dine on delectable delicacies and savor our ‘spotted leopard’ specialty martinis.”

For those looking to take home a souvenir from their “African Odyssey,” the silent and live auctions will provide a number of spectacular shopping opportunities. The silent auction will feature a variety of African-inspired art and artifacts, as well as original artwork by acclaimed local and regional artists. The live auction will offer several prestigious items, such as a \$6,000 scholarship to Saint Francis University, an antique music box, a diamond ring, a bubbling rock water feature from Tussey Landscaping, and an original watercolor by Kevin Kutz featuring a Mount Aloysius winter scene. The live auction also will include a five-night vacation at beautiful Paradise Village in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico or a seven-night stay at another luxurious destination through Interval International Resort Directory; a whimsical, Raku-fired sculpture by Helen Gorsuch; and a Pittsburgh Pirates package that includes 15 tickets in a Pirates Charities suite, four parking passes and a visit from the Pirate Parrot. The

highlight of the live auction is an incredible 2000 Yamaha Mark III Series Disklavier Grand Piano.

On view during the Gala will be *Reflections: Artwork by Kevin Kutz*. With more than 55 paintings, drawings and mixed-media works on view, the exhibition charts Kutz's evolution as an artist. A painter and innovator, Kutz ranges from traditional plein-air realism to dreamlike explorations of time, place and memory. One of the region's best loved artists, Kutz is renowned for celebrating his native Bedford County and small town Americana with a passion and sincerity that speaks to the viewer.

This year's Gala is being led by a Leadership Circle consisting of Jim Cayce, Glenda Forosisky, Chantel and Dr. James Garofalo, Kerrie Kinzle, Kashana Kopac, Lindsey Kranich, Marian Morgan, Barbara and Ed O'Brien, Andrea Okonak, John Reffner, Barbara and Larry Savino, Judy and Dick Scholton, Nancy Sheetz, Barbara Sincak, Margaret and Michael Strueber, and Samantha Wall.

The Gala will be held at 6 p.m. on July 18 on the campus of Saint Francis University in Loretto. Tickets are \$175 per person and can be purchased by calling the Museum at (814) 472-3920. Van transportation will be provided to and from Altoona, Johnstown and Ligonier. Advertising and sponsorship opportunities are available, and interested parties should contact the Museum.

Over the past three-plus decades, the Gala has evolved into one of the most sophisticated and complex outdoor social events in Pennsylvania. The proceeds from the event enable SAMA's four museums – Altoona, Johnstown, Ligonier Valley and Loretto – to remain open to the public free of charge. The Gala also helps underwrite the Museum's world-class exhibitions and innovative Arts-in-Education and Museum/Healthcare Partnership programs. For more information on the Gala, call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.

SAMA's "African Odyssey" Gala is sponsored by Blair Companies and Sheetz, Inc. Also contributing to the Gala is: Andrews & Beard Law Offices; Karen and Dr. Magdi Azer; Benzel's Bretzel Bakery; Blair County Anesthesia, P.C.; Jim Cayce and Tom Dosh; Coldwell Banker Town & Country Real Estate; Deborah DeGol and Robert Krumroy; Chantel and Dr. James Garofalo; Jeanne and Robert Gleason; Kooman & Associates; Kranich's, Inc.; Marianne and Guy Landolfi; Laurel Motors Holding Co.; Diane and Dr. Scott Little; Marian and Dr. Owen K. Morgan; Dorothea Nelson; Barry Newborn; Barbara and Ed O'Brien; Penn State Altoona; Margaret and Michael Strueber; Treasures of the Earth; Dr. Paul V. Woolley and Janet M. Turjan; and Aline and Gerald Wolf.