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**SAMA NIGHT OF DISTINCTION TO CELEBRATE ALTOONA MUSEUM,
PATRONS**

Altoona – Altoona will be front and center when the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art hosts its third annual Night of Distinction on Saturday, April 26. For the first time, the event will be held at SAMA's Altoona facility as the Museum celebrates its thirty-fifth anniversary in Blair County. SAMA also will honor four individuals at the program, each of whom has strong ties to the Altoona community.

Night of Distinction was established as a platform to honor some of the Museum's most dedicated and longest-serving benefactors. This year, SAMA will present Dr. Betty J. Lowell Cottle and Nancy Devorris with Service to the Arts awards, while Joseph Mack and Gerald P. Wolf are honored with Trustee Emeritus appointments.

Dr. Betty J. Lowell Cottle's life has been dedicated to not only bettering the lives of her fellow community members, but also healing them. She enjoyed a successful career as a medical doctor, including serving as medical director of Bon Secours-Holy Family Regional Health System in Altoona from 1996 to 2004. She and her husband, Dr. Harold Cottle, have made significant contributions to the arts and SAMA throughout the years, including the donation of three of the Museum's signature sculptures: Carole A. Feuerman's hyper-realistic works, *On Deck* and *Self Portrait*, and the bronze, *Torso*, by Peter Calaboyias.

There are few people in the Altoona area whose lives have not been impacted by philanthropist and community leader, Nancy Devorris. She has been an active member of SAMA's Board of Trustees since 1990 and has been very supportive of the Altoona Museum and its annual fashion show fundraiser. Devorris is a board member of Blair County Arts Foundation and received the WISE Women of Blair County's Community Service Volunteer Award in 2010. She received an honorary doctorate as a community philanthropist through Mount Aloysius College and was honored by Penn State University with its Honorary Alumni Award in 2012.

Joseph Mack, one of SAMA's longest tenured trustees, will be honored with a posthumous appointment as Trustee Emeritus. Mack joined SAMA's Board in 1978 and

served thirty-three years, including a term as President and Chair, before stepping down in 2011. He and his wife, Barbara, were honored by the Museum in 2003 with the Service to the Arts Award. Among his most recent acts of generosity was the donation of a collection of seventy-four works on paper by the American Impressionist painter, Milton Herbert Bancroft.

Also being appointed to the ranks of Trustee Emeritus is Gerald P. Wolf. Many in the SAMA family know Wolf as one of the Museum's most significant supporters and financial contributors. He was elected to the Board of Trustees in 1978 and served as chairman of the acquisitions committee, executive committee, finance committee, and three terms as President. He was a leading force in the establishment of the Altoona Museum in 1979 and, along with his wife Aline, developed an impressive collection of signed American lithographs that were donated to SAMA in 2006 and today stand as a significant part of the Museum's permanent collection.

SAMA began its expansion in 1979 with the opening of the Altoona Extension. Over the years, SAMA's presence in Blair County has moved to various locations throughout Altoona and Hollidaysburg, but the Museum's mission of making the arts accessible to the residents of Blair County has never changed. In 1994, the Museum moved to its current location in the Brett Building – a facility designed with state-of-the-art exhibition and storage space. The Museum has since built itself into the cultural foundation of Downtown Altoona by offering quality exhibitions and education programs, plus popular events such as the Blue Monday music and art series and the annual fashion show fundraiser. The Museum also serves as a repository for the Altoona Area Public Library's collection of late 19th century photographs by William H. Rau, the official photographer of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Night of Distinction is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 26. The event begins with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the SAMA-Altoona galleries before moving next door to The Columns for dinner and awards presentation. Cost is \$80 per person. Reservations are required by April 21. For reservations or information, please call (814) 472-3920.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is located in the Brett Building at 1210 Eleventh Avenue. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. Parking is available in the garage across the street or in metered spots in the lot at the rear of the building. For more information, call the Museum at (814) 946-4464 or visit www.sama-art.org.