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## **GALA TO CELEBRATE MUSEUM'S 40<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

Loretto – This summer, the Happy Birthday Song will be echoing throughout the rolling hills of Northern Cambria County. Hundreds of art lovers, community philanthropists and business leaders will converge on Loretto's Saint Francis University campus on Saturday, July 16 to celebrate "Birthday Bash," the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art's annual Gala. The event, recognizing the Museum's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, will offer its signature blend of games of chance, fine art, live music and entertainment, live and silent auctions, and fabulous specialty bars. Nancy Sheetz is honorary chair.

Upon arrival, guests will make their way to the Museum gallery for a champagne reception along with the exhibition, *The Finest of Forty*, which celebrates the most remarkable and significant treasures of SAMA's permanent collection. Under the tent, guests will find themselves at a giant birthday party, complete with oversized presents and wrapping, special lighting, and a birthday cake at every table. As well, the Museum will offer its fabulous raw bar, casino-style games and live music.

Performing at this summer's Gala is Johnstown's Flood City Brass Band. Formed in 2002, the 9-piece horn band features two lead vocalists and a dynamite rhythm section. The band has performed at festivals and events throughout the region and was voted *Best Band in Johnstown* by readers of the Tribune-Democrat. Also performing at the Gala will be vocalist Jill Gontkovic accompanied by keyboardist Luis Gonzalez.

A silent auction will offer an incredible selection of antiques, artwork, collectibles, gift baskets and event tickets. The live auction will offer an outstanding array of special items, including Fred Danziger and Michael M. Strueber paintings and two Raku sculptures by Helen Gorsuch. Vacation packages to Fallingwater, Omni Bedford Springs Resort & Spa and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico will be available, as will a hand-signed Erté lithograph, a \$6,000 scholarship to Saint Francis University, spillway bowls courtesy of Tussey Landscaping, and a Pittsburgh Pirates package that includes 15 tickets in a luxury suite and four parking passes for the August 19 game versus the Miami Marlins. Also available in the live auction will be a Morley's Dog statue painted in a Johnstown Tomahawks/Kraft Hockeyville theme. Donated by Sen. John Wozniak and Cambria County Crime Stoppers, the sculpture is autographed by Mario Lemieux

and members of the Stanley Cup Champion Pittsburgh Penguins, as well as the “Hanson Brothers” and members of the NBC Sports team.

“This year’s ‘Birthday Bash’ Gala, celebrating SAMA’s 40th birthday, promises to be a visual, sound and taste sensation,” said Leadership Circle member and SAMA Trustee Jim Cayce. “After arriving to valet parking, you will be greeted with live music. Enter the Museum for a champagne reception, fabulous art and soothing keyboard artistry. Then it’s out to the ‘Big Top’ for cocktails, our famous seafood raw bar, silent and live auctions, games of chance and a fabulous dinner. Finally, dance the night away with Flood City Brass Band’s full complement of vocalists and musicians.”

Leading this year’s Gala is a Leadership Circle comprised of 31 talented individuals: Karen Azer, Ann Benzel, Maureen Calandra, Jim Cayce, Gail Corle, Anne Creany, Cassandra Davies, Nancy Devorris, Glenda Forosisky, Barbara Hollander, Marianne and Tim Houser, Shirley Hoyne, 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, Chantel Ventura, and Samantha Wall.

The 38<sup>th</sup> annual Gala will begin at 6 p.m. on July 16. Tickets are \$175 per person. Reservations are required by July 12. For tickets or more information, call 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 nearly four 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](http://www.sama-art.org).

The “Birthday Bash” Gala is sponsored by Blair Companies; Sheetz, Inc.; and Nancy and Steve Sheetz. Also contributing to the Gala is: Andrews & Beard Law Offices; Askew-Houser Funeral Homes, Inc.; Karen and Dr. Magdi Azer; Benzel’s Bretzel Bakery; Blair County Anesthesia, P.C.; Blue Sparks Capital Advisors; Mary and Dr. Joel Borkow; Suzy and James Broadhurst; Jim Cayce and Tom Dosh; Coldwell Banker Town & Country Real Estate; Dr. Betty Cottle; Deborah DeGol and Robert Krumroy; Jeanne and Robert Gleason; Hoss’s Steak & Sea House Corp.; Kooman & Associates; Kranich’s, Inc.; Laurel Auto Group; Daniel Lawruk; Diane and Dr. Scott Q. Little; Marian and Dr. Owen K. Morgan; Barry Newborn; Barbara and Ed O’Brien; Sylvia and Donald Robinson; Nancy Sheetz; Margaret and Michael Strueber; Chantel Ventura; Aline and Gerald Wolf; and Dr. Paul V. Woolley and Janet M. Turjan.