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LORETTO MUSEUM TO HOST 5TH ANNUAL *NIGHT OF DISTINCTION*

Loretto – Special events dot the calendar in the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art’s 40th anniversary year, and one of the biggest of those events is coming this spring. On Saturday, April 16, the Loretto Museum will host the fifth annual *Night of Distinction*, a dinner-and-awards event established to honor individuals and organizations that have made an extraordinary impact on SAMA and the arts.

At this year’s event, SAMA will present its prestigious Service to the Arts Award to Margaret and Michael Strueber, the Museum’s founding director. Longtime SAMA trustees Karen Azer and Mary Borkow will receive the Volunteerism Award. Two former awards will be resurrected when Ligonier native Chas Fagan is presented the Award for Artistic Distinction and Omni Bedford Springs Resort & Spa receives the Award for Architectural Excellence.

“*Night of Distinction* offers an outstanding slate of awardees,” said Gary Moyer, SAMA Executive Director. “Each awardee has made meaningful and noteworthy contributions to their communities, the arts and the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art. Their active participation in this region’s arts scene is witness to our shared appreciation of creativity and artistic excellence and the crucial role they play in sustaining an inventive and creative community. In short, we all benefit from what they have done and what they have accomplished.”

Night of Distinction is scheduled for 6 to 9 p.m. on April 16. Cost is \$85 per person. Reservations are required by April 11. For reservations or more information, please call the Museum at (814) 472-3920.

Service to the Arts Award

Margaret and Michael Strueber’s lives have been intricately aligned with service to the arts throughout their 45 years of married life. Mr. Strueber was the founding director of SAMA, serving in that capacity for 24 years. During his time at the Museum, he oversaw the development of the staff, permanent collection, Arts-in-Education programs, special events and exhibitions; led the process toward national accreditation;

and brought three satellite museums into the SAMA system. He remains actively involved with the Museum as a trustee and *Director Emeritus*.

Prior to his time with SAMA, Mr. Strueber was a tenured professor at Saint Francis College, serving in the education department as well as chairing the fine arts department. He founded the Pennsylvania Rural Arts Alliance and served as its president for 10 years and also has been a reviewer for the National Endowment for the Arts and the accreditation committee of the American Association of Museums. Other career highlights include serving on the oversight committee of Fallingwater, chairing the Cordelia S. May Trust, and serving on the board of Phipps Conservatory. Mr. Strueber is managing director of the Colcom Foundation, *Trustee Emeritus* of Juniata College, and also maintains a professional career as an artist.

Mrs. Strueber has consistently volunteered her social, culinary and organizational skills to benefit a variety of causes. She has played a vital role in a number of SAMA Galas, receptions, and other programs. The Struebers own and operate the Allegheny Art Gallery in Hollidaysburg.

Volunteerism Award

Karen Azer is a dedicated and determined volunteer who has made a passionate commitment to school, hospital and church interests. She served a number of terms on the Westmont Hilltop School Board, helping to bring technology upgrades to the school and raising academic standards. She has served on the boards of the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra and Community Arts Center of Cambria County for more than 20 years, and has been on the Johnstown Area Heritage Association's board for the past 15 years. Azer actively supports the arts, having been a SAMA trustee for 13 years and a member of the Gala Leadership Circle. She is deeply involved with a number of organizations including Rotary Club of Johnstown, Cambria Association for the Blind and Handicapped, and The Learning Lamp. Azer's list of honors includes the Apollo Award, Four Avenues of Service Award from Rotary International and the WQED Dominion VITA Award, and was a Cambria County YWCA Tribute to Women Honoree (Arts and Letters).

To many in the Greater Johnstown region, Mary Borkow exemplifies what it means to be a volunteer. She has devoted countless hours to a host of organizations in an attempt to make her community a better place. Since 1983, Borkow has been an active member of the Greater Johnstown Chamber of Commerce, during which time she has served as chair of the Business and Professional Alliance, Cultural Affairs Committee, and the Chamber's annual dinner. Her outreach also extends into the art world, where she has served on SAMA's Board of Trustees since 1988, including nearly twenty years as chair of the nominating committee. She is president of the Roxbury Bandshell Preservation Alliance, a committee member of the Johnstown

Public Arts Alliance, and serves on several other boards and auxiliaries. SAMA's Volunteerism Award will join a long list of honors, including placement in the Who's Who of American Women and the Greater Johnstown Chamber of Commerce Business Hall of Fame. Borkow has previously received the YWCA Tribute to Women Award, WQED Dominion VITA Award, Four Chaplains Award, and Apollo Award.

Award for Artistic Distinction

Originally from Ligonier, Chas Fagan combines his artistic gifts with his knowledge of history to create several high-profile commissions. His statue of President Reagan stands in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. He designed and created a "young Neil Armstrong" for Purdue University, including a surrounding plaza with moon boot prints. His sculptures of Mother Teresa and Rosa Parks were carved into the narthex of Washington National Cathedral. And his monumental-scale sculpture of horse and rider – Revolutionary hero Captain James Jack – is one of Charlotte, NC's most iconic pieces. His portraits of notable and historical individuals include the official White House portrait of First Lady Barbara Bush, the portrait of Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Norman Borlaug, and a complete set of oil portraits of all the Presidents, which now tours the country for the White House Historical Association and C-SPAN.

Award for Architectural Excellence

One of America's first great destination resorts, the Omni Bedford Springs Resort & Spa property dates from 1796 when physician Dr. John Anderson purchased the existing 2,200-acre site. Visitation to the land predates Dr. Anderson, however, as Native Americans frequented the area for its several mineral springs. Despite hosting 11 U.S. Presidents over the years, the property eventually began to show its age and closed in 1986. Upon a completion of a four-year, \$120 million-plus renovation in 2007, the resort and spa reopened. In 2009, it came under management of Omni Hotels and became the Omni Bedford Springs Resort & Spa. Today, the resort boasts 216 luxury guest rooms and suites, all elegantly restored to reflect the rich and diverse history of the property. Other features include a 20,000 square-foot state-of-the-art meeting and events center; five unique dining venues; swimming, recreational, fitness and archery centers; and much more. Also of note is The Bedford Springs Old Course – a storied 18-hole golf course originally established in 1895.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto is located on the campus of Saint Francis University. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Museum is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.