

Council History

Part Two - The Second 10 Years

1965

The Council initiated and hosted the first "Unwinder" reception at the Museum. Husbands of Council members were invited to attend at the end of their workday; their price of admission was to bring one professional male friend. More than 120 men attended the first event, and were taken on tours of the Museum galleries by Council Tour Guides. A second "Unwinder" was scheduled for 1966. These events sparked new interest in corporate patronage for the Museum.

Council members were offered three lecture courses over the year: "Aspects of Theatre Arts," a series on decorative arts, and several "Private Views," of art in the galleries.

The Shop had 163 volunteers who worked a total of 6500 hours buying, displaying and selling merchandise. A day chairman was put in charge of the workers for each day in the Shop. The Shop continued its policy of closing from mid-June until September.

There was another successful Viennese Ball, netting about \$2700.

To the delight of the Tour Guides, this year marked the creation of manuals on the permanent collections, with large photos and extensive fact sheets on artworks. These were made available for study and tour preparation, in addition to the lectures provided by staff members. (fig. 1) The year also saw the first summer tours, necessitated by the very popular Greek Gold Exhibition.

The Council began a Graphic Arts Fund, established to make purchases in this medium for the Museum. The Council gave just under \$9,000 to the Trustees' Council Contribution Fund, as well as five silver-gilt candelabra and the chandeliers used for the Viennese Balls.

1966

The Council's 10th birthday celebration took place at the Viennese Ball. The music, "Lester Lanin in Person," was made possible by an anonymous donor. Past presidents and their husbands were honored at a dinner party before the ball.

In response to a request from Mr. Cheek, the Council agreed to host a "Building for the Arts" party at the Museum for Richmond area legislators and their wives. The purpose of this party was to give the lawmakers a slide show lecture on the Museum's plans for an addition to the building.

Council members continued to volunteer in the Museum Theatre box office and during intermission of each performance. Hostesses greeted guests and poured refreshments at every public function held at the Museum.

The Shop reported gross sales of over \$53,000, enabling a gift to the Museum of nearly \$16,400. This was an increase of over \$7,000 from the previous year. All this after only five years of operation, and being closed each summer!

1967

The Viennese Ball was a sell-out, with Governor and Mrs. Mills Godwin as the honored guests. Harper's Magazine covered the event with story and pictures. The biggest event of the Council's year was The Parsons School of Design Fashion Show, presented in May, chaired by Beth Buckle. This marked the first time the school presented a fashion show outside of New York. (fig.2) The event was underwritten by a trustee of Parsons; sponsors in Richmond were Miller & Rhoads, Montaldo's and Thalhimer's. Five international designers and the president of Parsons School of Design attended a dinner before the fashion show. Later 360 guests enjoyed a buffet supper and danced to the music of Howard Devron. The event generated more than \$4725, which was donated to the Trustees' Council Contribution Fund.

Council volunteers began staffing the Museum's Loan-Own Gallery in the afternoons. This enterprise, located in Robinson House (fig. 3), offered contemporary artworks by Virginia artists for rent and/or purchase to local residents and businesses. In addition, artists whose works were awarded a Certificate of Distinction were promised a one-person show in Robinson House, including an opening night preview party with refreshments and hostesses, all provided by the Council.

The 54 Council Tour Guides were kept extremely busy giving tours to thousands of visitors to the Hogarth exhibit. This exhibit also boosted Shop sales, helping to create the \$18,892.85 given by the Shop to the Trustees' Council Contribution Fund.

1968

Because the Museum was in the midst of a building expansion, it was decided not to have a Viennese Ball.

The Council gave its Library Book Fund \$5000.

The Council approved a new category of membership, "Associate," requiring prior Active status for a minimum of 5 years, higher dues, and no voting or office-holding privileges.

The lecture series for Council members included talks on English porcelain and the history of glass art. The Trustees' Council Contribution Fund transferred \$10,000 to the State Services Fund for the purchase of films on art to be used throughout the state.

As suggested by Leslie Cheek, the Council's Curator Fund was established, to purchase art for the Museum. It was decided that the Council would contribute \$5000 each year to the fund.

At the request of Mr. Cheek, the Council sponsored the first Corporate Patron's Gala. The ranks of Tour Guides swelled to 75, and a Shop Evaluation Committee was formed to explore the needs of the Shop for its new quarters after the Museum's expansion.

1969

For the first time, the Council-sponsored lecture series, "Aspects of Art," was opened to the public, with great success.

In conjunction with the Museum, the Council planned and hosted a tea and tour of the Museum for wives of state legislators during the General Assembly.

It was decided that the wife of the President of the Museum Board would always be an honorary Council member.

The Council commissioned a rug to be made as a gift to Mr. and Mrs. Cheek upon Mr. Cheek's retirement as Museum Director.

\$4000 was transferred from the Trustees' Council Contribution Fund to the Council Library Fund.

"Aspects of Art" moved to the fall and was again open to the public.

The Council Shop decided to hire a full-time secretary.

The Council continued its long-standing practice of supporting and promoting events, especially those for children, presented in the Museum Theatre by other groups in Richmond. These included The Virginia Dance Society, The Chamber Music Society, The Paper Bag Players, and others.

1970

The New Year brought a gala opening of the beautiful new south wing of the Museum on January 26th. (fig. 4). The Council sent the invitations, provided the decorations and worked as hostesses for the big event. Tour Guides conducted special tours and other Council members poured punch that entire week. Newspaper and television coverage was considered excellent. Nearly 14,000 people visited the Museum during the four-day opening.

The Council also planned, made decorations, and hosted a Patrons' Gala, for both corporate and individual donors to the Museum. The event was a sellout and had a long waiting list; more than \$1,000 in profits was given to the Council Curator's Fund.

The new south wing meant more space available for the Council Shop. \$12,000 was set aside to facilitate the changes and to buy new display cases and inventory.

"Aspects of Art" focused on contemporary art.

Tour Guides began providing tours for new members of the Museum as well as the usual tour groups.

1971

Director James M. Brown requested and received \$13,000 from the Council for the Library, Curator, Graphic Arts, and State Services Funds.

The Viennese Ball and the corporate and individual patrons'

events were combined into one large event, called the Council Ball. Mrs. Linwood Holton, wife of the Governor, was honorary chairman. The net proceeds of over \$400 went into the Council savings account.

The annual "Evening in the Galleries," with special tours and a reception for Council members and their husbands, featured gallery talks by Bill Gaines and Fred Brandt.

The Board decided to discontinue promotion and hosting of the youth events put on by the Chamber Music and Virginia Dance Societies.

68 Council Tour Guides expanded their tour hours to include morning tours, beginning at 11:30. A Tour of the Month program was begun for the general public.

The Council placed over \$31,700 in its Contribution Fund, due largely to the huge success of the Council Shop.

1972

Council planned, decorated and hosted a dinner-dance for Corporate Patrons, "Fête Aux Galleries," netting over \$740.

The group which had organized and executed the Safaris to other museums and galleries in Virginia and nearby states became the Travel Committee and planned trips to New York and abroad for Council members

In response to a request from the Director, the Council gave \$5800 to the Museum's Fellowship Fund, to be given to undergraduate and graduate students and to professional artists for their services to the Museum. The new Photography Teaching Studio received a gift of \$6,000 for the purchase of equipment.

The Shop stayed open through the summer months for the first time, and began to focus on selling works made by Virginia Craftsmen.

The Council undertook a project for each member to bring in a new Museum member.

1973

Council membership reached 670.

The Council's first gift of fine art to the Museum was Oracle, a sculpture by Seymour Lipton (fig. 5). In addition, Director James Brown

asked for and received \$28,300 from the Council Contribution Fund.

"The Gallery Guide to the Museum" was published with Council funds.

The Council assisted in the Open House events to encourage new members for the Museum, and later created a new Council board position, Museum Membership Chairman.

Phillip Morris rented and eventually bought 18 paintings from the Loan-Own Gallery for its new headquarters building.

The Museum began construction of another wing, on the north side of the building.

1974

"Aspects of Art" had three times more applications than spaces available. A Volunteer Committee was created to explore new volunteer opportunities and to increase interest in existing placements.

As a special treat, the May lecture/luncheon featured an outdoor picnic.

The Museum planned a "Downtown Gallery" in the new F & M Center with a \$5,000 gift from the Council and the help of 41 regular Council volunteers in the new space Council initiated the practice of giving a book each year to the Museum Library in memory of Council members who had died that year.

Gallery Hostesses began working at the Information Desk, in the galleries, and in the Artmobile in the Museum parking lot (fig.6)

The Board decided to revamp the member application form and tighten the requirements for volunteer hours.

