

Council History

Part Four - The Fourth Decade

1985

Council Members began working at the Information Desk on Thursday evenings, and staffed the Museum Membership Desk, the Speakers Bureau and the new Saturday morning youth programs. It was decided that all new Council members must spend their first year working in the Shop.

The Council Travel Committee hosted trips to Europe, New York City, and New England.

The Virginia Museum Theatre became Theatre Virginia, and the Youth Guild became High School Programs; both programs continued to have Council volunteers.

Council voted to donate \$100,000 over two years for the renovation of the Asian Galleries. Dr. Joe Dye gave a talk on these galleries at one of the three Little Dinners.

The official opening of the new West Wing took place on December 3 (*fig. 1*), with an elegant black tie Dinner Dance, planned and executed by the Council (*fig. 2*). Attendees included J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery, Andy Warhol, and the French Ambassador (*fig. 3*). The event netted over \$155,000 for the Museum.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hirschler established an endowment for the purpose of providing fresh flower arrangements in the new north lobby every week.

1986

The Council joined the Museum in celebrating the Museum's 50th anniversary.

A "wearable art" fashion show was included in the annual Legislative Wives' Day, followed by lunch, a Docent-led tour of the new West Wing and a visit to the Shop.

As the result of a Council membership drive,

94 new members were welcomed in the Spring. Dues were increased to \$20 for actives and \$30 for associates. New placements were added to assist the staff.

Frances Lewis was honored at the January lecture/luncheon, with the day being declared Frances Lewis Day.

Museum staff assumed management of the Docent program. One Council Docent would be appointed each year to serve as a liaison to the Council Board.

Two members traveled to Boston to attend "Art in Bloom" at the Museum of Fine Arts, with the idea of having a similar event at our Museum in 1987. After communication with the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs and the Garden Club of Virginia, it was decided to pursue such an event at our Museum.

As an attempt to attract new, younger members, Friends of Art, a Museum support group of 25 to 40 year-olds, was established. Council provided \$5,000 in seed money.

Council was able to give \$100,000 to the Museum, due to greatly increased Shop sales.

1987

Director Paul Perrot declared the Council Shop among the three best museum shops in the country, and congratulated the managers on the elevated quality of merchandise. Proceeds from the Shop given to the Museum were \$250,000.

The Council Board decided to raise the contribution to the Council Curators' Fund from \$5,000 to \$15,000, bringing the total contribution to the Museum to \$182,000.

The Ticket Desk was added to the list of Council volunteer placements.

The first Fine Arts & Flowers was held in

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October, using the help of more than 500 volunteers. The evening Preview Gala hosted 550 guests. About 2600 people attended over the next two days. Garden club members throughout Virginia interpreted 54 of the Museum's masterworks (*fig. 4*). The three-day event netted \$32,200, in addition to the Shop sales, which reached \$13,000. Some of the monies raised were allocated to landscaping around the Museum.

1988

The National Conference of Volunteer Committees of Art Museums (VCAM) held its meeting at the Virginia Museum, sponsored by the Council. Over 200 members attended from all over the U.S. and Canada. The four-day meeting was considered very successful.

Deborah Frazier became the new staff representative to Council, following the move by Dr. Rasmussen to become Assistant Curator of American Art.

Heirloom Discovery Day was held in October, with five appraisers from Sotheby's evaluating pieces brought in by members and their guests, and by the general public (*fig. 5*).

A magnificent three-piece Meissen tureen set was given to the Museum by the Council. The set had been made for the King of Poland.

The annual Museum Christmas tree lighting ceremony was attended by 750 people. The Council dinner afterwards welcomed 175 members and guests. As in the past, new ornaments were designed by Virginia craftsmen and became available for sale in the Council Shop (*fig. 6*).

1989

The Museum Board of Trustees passed a resolution honoring the Council's many years of service. This was shared with the membership at the February lecture/luncheon. A group of 52

new Council members was welcomed and began orientation in January.

The Travel Committee hosted trips to Spain and Portugal, Canada, and Washington D.C.

A moveable stage for use in the Marble Hall was purchased with funds provided by the Council.

The second biannual Fine Arts and Flowers was very successful. Proceeds of nearly \$35,000 went to the Museum Conservation Endowment and the Horticulture Fund.

Council decided to donate a book to the Library each year in memory of Council members who had died during the year.

The annual Holiday Open House became a joint venture of the Council, Friends of Art and the Education and Outreach department. 1360 people attended the event.

1990

Council joined the Museum community in mourning the loss of Pinckney Near (*fig. 7*), former Chief Curator and friend of the Council, and made a \$2,000 donation to the Museum Library in his honor.

The annual spring Council Dinner had a Greek theme, to go with the special Byzantine exhibit, "Holy Image, Holy Space."

The Council donated \$30,000 toward the renovation of the Members' Suite. A gift of \$100,000 was made for the purchase of 13 frames from the 19th century to be used for American paintings in the collection.

The main Council fundraiser for the year was "Splendors of the Taj Mahal," a gala black-tie evening (*fig. 8*) in conjunction with the blockbuster exhibit of the same name. Over \$119,000 was raised to purchase a work of Indian art.

1991

The Museum gave a tea for all Council members in April as a thank you for our many contributions to the Museum.

Council continued to fund the Distinguished Lecture Series. The Shop gift to the Council Contribution Fund was \$275,000.

Director Paul Perrot retired and was thanked by the Council for his years of service to the Museum. New Director, Katharine C. Lee, joined the Museum in the summer.

The third Fine Arts & Flowers expanded to an evening and three days. The Gala entertained 500 attendees, with 5000 visitors touring the exhibits over the ensuing days. The record proceeds were just under \$100,000, and helped fund the special exhibition, "The Making of Virginia Architecture," and a book on the same subject.

1992

Because of severe budget cuts demanded by the state legislature, Council funds were used to help with Museum operating expenses for the first time. A one-time allocation of \$35,000 was approved. Later there was an additional gift of \$238,210 from Shop proceeds, to be used for Museum programs.

The Council had a booth at the Southern Women's Show, promoting Museum membership, the Council Shop, and advance orders for the Council cookbook.

Mary Tyler Cheek was made an Honorary Member of the Council.

"Virginia Celebrates," a Council cookbook project which took three years to complete, went on sale in the Council Shop and in several retail locations throughout the state. Proceeds helped fund the statewide education and outreach programs.

1993

The Council Travel Committee hosted trips to Edenton, NC, Washington D.C., and Colorado.

A new event, "Volunteer Recognition Day," was held in April and sponsored by the Council. Special recognition was given the volunteers who have given many hours and special services to the Museum, followed by "high tea."

The By-laws were amended to allow community docents with more than two years of service to join the Council and continue being a docent without the requirement of working in the Shop.

The fourth Fine Arts & Flowers had an Italian-themed gala, over 5,000 visitors, and realized just under \$94,000.

The Holiday Open House and tree lighting festivities had an attendance of 2200 people.

1994

The Speaker's Bureau was moved from being a Council Placement to inclusion in the Docent program.

Council Shop income of \$225,000 helped fund "Three Days in March," an arts program held at the Museum for selected high school students from throughout the state; the Jewel Rivers and Secrecy exhibitions; Byzantine Gallery installation and catalogue; the TEAMS program; Museum Library; VA Docent Exchange; Conservation labs; several publications; and many other projects. Council also purchased a new 18-ft. Christmas tree, lights and decorations.

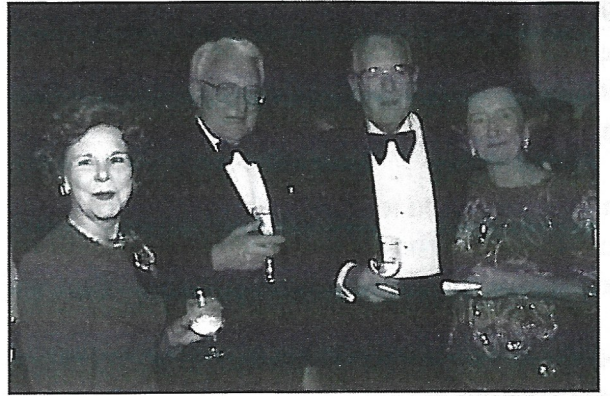
Of the 70,000 volumes in the Museum Library, 40,000 were gifts from the Council.

Another Heirloom Discovery Day was held in November, this time with the Virginia Historical Society; Sotheby's again did the appraising. Net income was \$11,800.

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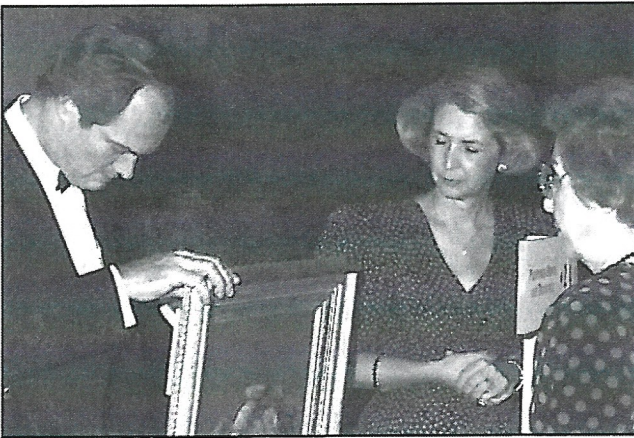
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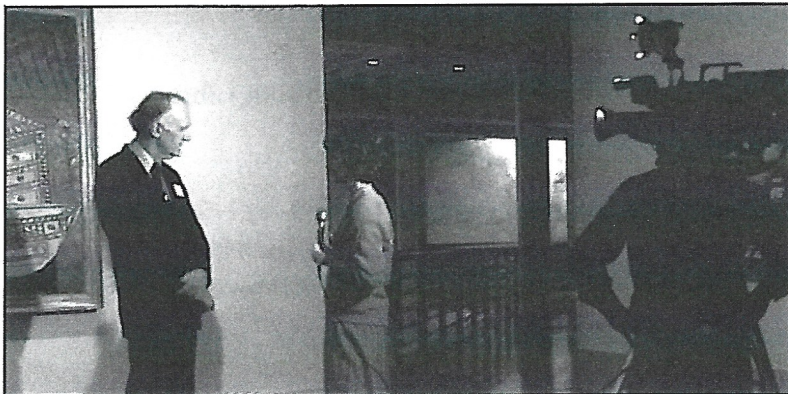
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