

Council History

Part Six – The Sixth Decade

2005

The Council began a celebration of its 50th anniversary.

Council members assisted in the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new expansion. A special 50th anniversary ornament was designed and sold in the Shop.

The Council invited a jewelry specialist to give a presentation on antique jewelry and do free appraisals for Council members.

2006

Continuing to celebrate the 50th anniversary, The Council used existing funds and individual donations to purchase "The Quarry," (*fig.1*) a painting by the Hudson River School artist Robert Scott Duncan, the first African-American painter to achieve international fame.

The Shop continued to thrive in its temporary space in the 1985 wing, adjacent to the Mellon Galleries.

The Travel Committee organized very successful overnight trips to New York City and Philadelphia, and a day trip to Washington, DC.

The annual Holiday Open House was a big success, helped by the Strange's Florists and Greenhouses donation of a 12- foot lighted tree, which was decorated by Council members (*fig.2*).

2007

The Council began offering docent-led "Morning in the Galleries" tours in the hour before each general membership meeting.

The family of Elizabeth Bryson Powell, first Council President, donated "Glacier Park (Montana), a painting by Charles Warren Baton, to honor Mrs. Powell and The Council's 50th anniversary.

A Council Recruitment Committee was formed to increase membership in advance of the museum's expansion.

Fine Arts & Flowers moved to the weekend and added two new events: a Jewelry Fair (*fig. 3*), bringing in master jewelry artists to sell their creations, and a Family Event on Saturday, offering craft activities, music, a book illustrator, and a treasure hunt throughout the museum. Both events were very successful, with the Jewelry Fair

adding over \$21,000 to the FAF net profit of \$102,000, a new high for the event.

The Shop participated in both the Holiday and the Spring Bizarre Bazaar, with great success.

2008

A "New Shop" Committee was formed to select a firm to design and help outfit the 3500 square foot space in the new wing. Charles Sparks + Co., a Chicago firm, was selected to execute this project. Work began immediately.

The Travel committee was busy with overnight trips to New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Santa Fe, and day trips to Washington DC and Williamsburg.

A Recruitment Committee was formed, with the goal of increasing Council membership by 100 members. Several recruiting events, including coffees, teas and a wine & cheese gathering, were held. A new Council brochure and application form were designed and produced.

VMFA began to assume control of the Shop. The Council's Shop Management Committee became the Shop Oversight Committee. A new, paid staff was hired to take responsibility for the business and report directly to the Deputy Director

of Sales and Marketing. Volunteers continued to work on the sales floor and in the stock room.

"The New VMFA: Expect to Be Wowed," a power-point presentation, was created and taken by Council members to organizations in the Richmond area to create excitement about the expansion.

2009

Hard hat tours of the new wing were offered to Council members before the February meeting.

New member recruitment continued at Art After Hours events and a Volunteer Fair, which featured outside speakers.

With the advice of Shop designer Charles Sparks, The Council hired an outside shop consultant to assist in an evaluation of staffing needs and to advise on purchasing new inventory. Once the Sparks design was completed, responsibility for overseeing the build-out was shifted to the base building team, in order to expedite the shop's completion.

The Council welcomed 60 new members, and created a new list of job descriptions for all placements.

The Museum closed its doors to visitors beginning on July 1 and lasting until the opening of the

expansion. To keep the public interested and informed, The Council created a Speaker's Bureau to do slide and video presentations in the greater Richmond area.

The Council offered Monument Muse, a tour of local homes and art collections, to members.

The Council gave the new VMFA Shop \$50,000 for the build-out and \$20,000 for consultant Mary Bloom, who helped with buying and merchandizing. We also donated the funds for Art on the Spot, a kiosk where shop visitors could purchase and print posters of a variety of art objects in the collection.

The Council welcomed new Honorary members Richard Woodward, Curator of African and African American Art; Sandy Rusak, Council Liaison and head of Education; and Trudy Norfleet, Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer.

2010

The Council's Volunteer Task Force assessed the needs of the expanded museum, and held a Volunteer Opportunity Fair. The event "Engaging Today's Volunteers" took place in February, and featured outside speakers.

On May 1, VMFA held its grand opening of the newly expanded and redesigned space. Council members were involved in every aspect of the festivities. Among the many changes were: expanded hours, being open every day of the year, and being open on Thursday and Friday evenings.

The new VMFA Shop was beautiful and a huge success (*fig. 4*).

Several new volunteer placements were added, including Ask Me Ambassadors and School Group Greeters.

VMFA created a new position, Volunteer Coordinator, who will work with the Council volunteers as well as community volunteers.

Nearly 100 new Council members joined the ranks between May 1 and the end of 2010.

Fine Arts & Flowers, held in October, opened on a Wednesday evening with a formal gala. The Jewelry Fair was open throughout the four-day event. New features included Flowers After Hours, a wine event on Friday evening, and a Saturday luncheon and fashion show featuring designs created by VCU design students.

2011

In honor of the 75th anniversary of VMFA, The Council donated \$15,000

toward software to be used by the new Volunteer Coordinator for tracking and managing volunteers and their hours. We also held coffees in March and April to introduce her to our volunteers.

VMFA docents gave special tours of the very successful Picasso and Ife exhibitions, which both opened in February.

Ask Me Ambassadors began helping in the coat room and taking tickets during special exhibitions.

The Day of Artistic Sites in the Richmond area was extremely successful.

The Council Board approved the creation of a Communication Committee to manage and oversee all electronic content and logistics of communications with members.

Email addresses were added to the member information in The Council Directory.

VMFA decided that there would no longer be a Christmas tree or a Holiday Open House, both of which had been provided by The Council. A “tree” of poinsettias was placed in the Atrium at the site of the Hirschler Flowers (*fig. 5*). Large urns were donated and planted with topiary evergreens purchased by The Council;

these were placed outside the 1936 (Boulevard) entrance to VMFA. The topiaries were decorated with white lights. We also placed large wreaths on the double doors.

2012

The Council increased use of the internet to communicate with members on a regular basis.

VMFA began planning all overnight trips, and The Council Travel Committee became Membership Enrichment, offering only day trips.

The Volunteer Task Force held a fair in April to help old and new members become aware of new placement opportunities. A brochure outlining all placements was created.

Edible Flowers, a new offering created by Amuse chef Greg Haley for Fine Arts & Flowers, became a successful afternoon event. FA&F netted in excess of \$90,000 for VMFA.

The Council donated \$10,000 to VMFA Membership for the Outbound software program, for tracking new members and selling tickets.

A new Council Membership brochure was created and placed near the VMFA Membership desk.

The Shop Oversight Committee became The Shop Initiative Committee.

A new placement opportunity was created for members wanting to work in the Sculpture Garden and on the grounds (*fig. 6*).

E-News, a regular email communication with Council members, began going to the membership in October.

2013

Membership Enrichment events included a trip to Hillwood and “Day of Artistic Sites”, a day of visits to the homes of local art collectors.

The Dale Chihuly exhibition was a huge success for VMFA and the Shop. As a result, Shop Manager Michael Guajardo, gave Council members an extra 10% off of purchases in the Shop, for 3 days. A special plaque honoring the Council’s creation and support of the enterprise was placed in the Shop.

From Thanksgiving until Christmas, Council members volunteered to wrap gifts in the Shop, and also helped with sales at a “Pop-up” shop at a local shopping center.

Council docents began offering “Turn Back Time” tours to members, followed by refreshments.

After welcoming 56 new members, The Council embarked on a project to learn more about social media and how to use it to communicate with members and to promote activities.

The Council sponsored one of the costumes featured in the hugely successful exhibition “Hollywood Costume.”

2014

VMFA launched a new website, partially funded by The Council.

The Day of Artistic Sites included an African Art Adventure to homes of local collectors, and a day trip to Baltimore.

The Council Exhibition Fund donated to the Ryan McGinness: Studio Visit exhibition, which was installed in the 21st century galleries.

A Council Agreement outlining responsibilities was initiated as a requirement for all new Council members, along with a facilities tour and attendance at New Member Orientation. Volunteer mentors were assigned to call and welcome newcomers and invite them to Lecture-Luncheons.

In honor of the upcoming 60th anniversary, The Council allocated \$60,000 for VMFA to use in creating an exhibition space in the newly

renovated Robinson House; the exhibition is curated by former Associate Curator of American Art, Beth O'Leary.

Fine Arts & Flowers netted over \$110,000 and welcomed 15,000 attendees.

2015

As we continued a celebration of 60 years of service to VMFA, the "Turn Back Time" tours focused on the previous 6 decades.

Membership Enrichment offered two trips: a tour of Church Hill, and a day trip to Washington, DC to visit art collections at the World Bank and the US Department of the Interior.

In honor of the 60th anniversary, Martha Davenport, a charter member of The Council (*fig. 7*), gave VMFA two paintings by 20th century painter Nell Blaine. Director Alex Nyerges received the gifts at the fall membership meeting.

The spring issue of My VMFA featured an article celebrating The Council's 60 years of service and giving to the museum.

A "Pop-up" Shop was opened in August at Short Pump Town Center (*fig. 8*).

David Bradley, Director of Government Relations and Council

liaison to VMFA staff, and Stephen Bonadies, Deputy Director for Collections & Facilities Management were both made Honorary Council members.

The Council Endowment helped fund educational programs, Teen Stylin', Family Day workshops, the VMFA gardens, and docent trainings.

It has been a fruitful and exciting 60 years for The Council of VMFA; we look forward to many, many more.



1

2



3

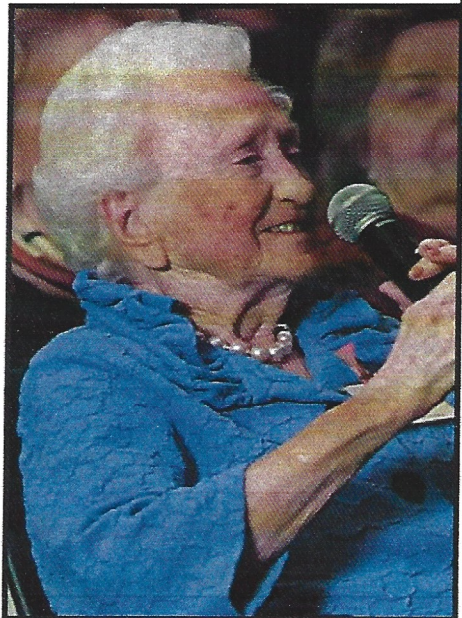
5



6



4



7

8

