



Press Release

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Richard and Mary L. Gray Honored with Joseph R. Shapiro Award

Award dinner raises \$400,000 in benefit of the Smart Museum of Art

October 15, 2008 – Last night, the University of Chicago’s Smart Museum of Art honored **Richard and Mary L. Gray** with the Joseph R. Shapiro Award. Presented every two years, the Shapiro Award recognizes the vision and connoisseurship of Chicago’s most distinguished collectors of art. Proceeds from the dinner will support the full range of the Smart Museum of Art’s academic and educational mission.

Saying that they “will long remember this evening,” the Grays accepted the award and expressed their appreciation to the 350 guests on hand. Held at the Four Seasons Hotel Chicago, the black tie dinner was attended by the city’s leading art collectors, civic leaders, artists, and arts patrons, as well as several faculty members and administrators from the University of Chicago.

“Though relatively young in the firmament of important Chicago visual arts institutions,” Richard Gray said, “it makes us very proud to be associated with the Smart Museum and very grateful to you for supporting it.” For fifteen years, Richard Gray served as chairman of the Smart Museum’s board of governors.

“I want to offer my warmest congratulations to Richard and Mary Gray,” said Anthony Hirschel, the Dana Feitler Director of the Smart Museum. “Our collection, as is true of all the great museums in town, has been enriched by the keen eye and generous spirit of collectors like these.”

Throughout their life together, Richard and Mary Gray have shared an extraordinary devotion to the arts. The couple’s personal collection is a study in connoisseurship, featuring exceptional impressionist, modern, and contemporary works, as well as a significant array of Old Master drawings. Both personally and professionally, the Grays have made an indelible contribution to the cultural life of Chicago, their lifelong home.

Richard Gray founded the Richard Gray Gallery, a leading dealer of modern and contemporary art, in 1963. He has served as president of the Art Dealers Association of America and as a member of the IRS Art Advisory Panel. A founder of both the Chicago Humanities Festival and the International Theatre Festival, Mr. Gray is a trustee of Newberry Library and a life trustee of the Art Institute, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Goodman Theatre, and WTTW/WFMT. At the University of Chicago, he serves on the Visual Arts and Humanities Visiting Committees and as Chairman Emeritus of the Smart Museum of Art’s board of governors.

An alumna of Bryn Mawr and the University of Chicago, **Mary Luckritz Gray** is the author of *A Guide to Chicago’s Public Sculpture* and *A Guide to Chicago’s Murals*. She serves on the Friends of the Parks Advisory Board, on the Art Institute’s Ryerson and Burnham Libraries Committee, and on the University of Chicago’s Visiting Committees for the Humanities, Library, and Oriental Institute. She and Richard have three married children and five grandchildren.

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The **Joseph R. Shapiro Award** honors the vision and connoisseurship of Chicago's most distinguished collectors of art. It is named in memory of the extraordinary collector and philanthropist Joseph Shapiro (1904–1996), who was an alumnus of the University of Chicago, a Life Trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the founding president of Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. Past honorees include Joseph R. Shapiro (1995), John H. Bryan (1997), Lindy Bergman (2000), Muriel Kallis Newman (2002), Susan and Lewis Manilow (2004), and Marilynn Alsdorf (2006).

This year's dinner was chaired by **Joan W. Harris**, one of Chicago's leading philanthropists and advocates for the arts, who praised the honorees for their deep connection to the arts. "Mary and Dick have indeed made a beautiful life in collecting and in the pursuit of the art they love so much."

In addition to the award presentation, the evening featured a cocktail reception, music by Alejo Poveda, and a video tribute to the Grays. **Robert Zimmer**, President of the University of Chicago, welcomed the guests; **Marvin Zonis**, Emeritus Professor at the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business, paid tribute to the Grays; **François Borne**, of Salamander Fine Arts in London, provided insight into the couple's exceptional collection; and **Robert Feitler**, Chair of the Smart Museum of Art's Board of Governors, presented the Shapiro Award. Several past Shapiro Award winners were also in attendance, including **Lindy Bergman**, **Lewis Manilow**, and **Marilynn Alsdorf**.

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As the art museum of the University of Chicago, the Smart Museum of Art takes a distinctly interdisciplinary approach to the collection, display, and interpretation of art. Founded in 1974, the Smart Museum is home to acclaimed special exhibitions and a permanent collection that spans five thousand years of artistic creation. Working in close collaboration with scholars from the University of Chicago, the Smart has established itself as a leading academic art museum and an engine of adventurous thinking about the visual arts and their place in society.

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Hours
Tues, Wed, Fri 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Thurs 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Sat and Sun 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Galleries closed Mondays and holidays
Café and Museum Shop open daily
Admission is FREE

The Smart Museum's general operating funds have been provided in part by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. The Museum's exhibitions and related programs are generously supported by the Smart Family Foundation; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Tom and Janis McCormick; Nuveen Investments; the Eloise W. Martin Fund; the Office of the Provost and the Visiting Committee on the Visual Arts, University of Chicago; and the members and friends of the Smart Museum. Education programs are supported by the Polk Bros. Foundation.