

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Foundation
Minutes of the Campaign Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 29, 2020, 4:00pm
Norwood and Marguerite Davis Terrace

There were present:

Jill Harris, Co-Chair
Monroe Harris, Co-Chair
Elizabeth Locke, Co-Chair
John Staelin, Co-Chair
Joanne Blakemore, *via electronic participation*
Joan Brock, *via electronic participation*
Cindy Conner, *via electronic participation*
Birch Douglass
Anne Edwards, *via electronic participation*
Mary Frediani
David Goode, *via electronic participation*
Susan Goode, *via electronic participation*
Meg Gottwald, *via electronic participation*
Hiter Harris, *via electronic participation*
Jil Harris, *via electronic participation*
Nancy Huber, *via electronic participation*
Peter Huber, *via electronic participation*
Bev Perdue Jennings, *via electronic participation*
Jim Klaus
Aubrey Layne, *via electronic participation*
Hubert Phipps, *via electronic participation*
Celia Rafalko
Mike Schewel, *via electronic participation*
Don Shockey, *via electronic participation*
Mary Shockey, *via electronic participation*
Jennifer Sisk, *via electronic participation*
Joey Smith
Sherrill Smith
Florence Lee Wellons

Absent:

Kelly Armstrong
Tiff Armstrong
Tom Farrell
Charles Johnson
Lilo Ukrop
Deborah Valentine

By Invitation:

Kay Baker, *via electronic participation*
Candy Banks, *via electronic participation*
Stephen Bonadies, *via electronic participation*
Caprice Bragg
Shanna Chandler, *via electronic participation*
Stephanie Cooperstein
Charlotte Couch, *via electronic participation*
Kristine Craig, *via electronic participation*
Naomi Crown, *via electronic participation*
Bonnie Devlin, *via electronic participation*
Tom Gutenberger
Jan Hatchette, *via electronic participation*
Sarah Hendricks, *via electronic participation*
Karen McGill
Jennifer Merritt, *via electronic participation*
Alex Nyerges
Katie Payne, *via electronic participation*
Deborah Price, *via electronic participation*
Hossein Sadid, *via electronic participation*
Jayne Shaw
Erin Sheets, *via electronic participation*
Mary Scott Swanson, *via electronic participation*
Michael Taylor
Steffi West, *via electronic participation*
Kimberly Wilson, *via electronic participation*

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm. Co-Chair John Staelin thanked everyone for their participation. Mr. Staelin spoke of the museum's fundraising success in FY20 despite the pandemic. He thanked the Garner family for initiating the successful VMFA COVID-19 Relief Fund with a lead gift, and highlighted the success of various virtual programs such as "*Cocktails with a Curator*". He also described the reimagining of events such as small, physically-distanced lunches in the Director's Office, and small tours of exhibitions such as *Sunken Cities*.

Mr. Staelin announced the new members that had joined the Campaign Committee since the last meeting, and thanked Nancy and Peter Huber for their recent leadership gift commitment to the campaign.

Mr. Staelin then discussed the ways in which he and Elizabeth Locke have been working to identify prospects for possible engagement with the museum. He encouraged others to do the same within their networks.

II. MUSEUM UPDATE

Director and CEO Alex Nyerges presented an update on the museum's closure of "three months, eighteen days and a few hours", noting that while VMFA has certainly felt the financial impact, we are in a solid position. We have seen an increase in contributions, rather than the anticipated 15-20% decrease. The Development staff implemented a strategy of significant donor outreach during the closure, which continues today. An impressive slate of virtual programming and online resources already existed, but these efforts have been expanded during the pandemic in order to reach new audiences, and engage members and donors in new ways.

Mr. Nyerges provided an update of the status of the state funding request of \$125M for the expansion.

III. CAMPAIGN/ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

Tom Gutenberger, Chief Development Officer and Deputy Director for Advancement, thanked the Co-Chairs for their leadership, and all of the Committee members for their support. He restated the goal of the campaign, \$365M, dependent upon state funding, and the length of the campaign of 7 years, with 3 years of the leadership phase, and 4 years of the public phase. We are in the second year of the leadership phase. He noted that Campaign Committee members receive monthly updates on progress, and reiterated a few of the successes. VMFA ended the fiscal year on June 30 with a campaign total of \$42M, and as of the meeting date, is closer to \$50M. Forty Campaign Committee members were recruited which exceeded expectations. To date the following commitments have been received: 29 commitments of \$100,000 or more, 6 commitments to name spaces in the expansion and renovation project and 2 commitments for new endowments for education and exhibitions.

Mr. Gutenberger then provided other fundraising highlights for FY20. Overall fundraising was up 40%, exhibition fundraising was up 69%, unrestricted fundraising was up 9%, membership was up 2%, and 25 new Director's Society memberships were received (\$50,000 annually).

Next, Mr. Gutenberger elaborated on the various ways in which the Advancement team has adapted their efforts and outreach for the COVID environment. He outlined the next steps for the Committee and turned the meeting over to Bonnie Devlin, Campaign Consultant.

IV. CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT REPORT

Bonnie Devlin, Managing Principal with Washburn and McGoldrick, reviewed the current trends in the fundraising environment and noted that VMFA is already implementing many of the best practices. She noted that earlier distributions from Donor Advised Funds are occurring, and planned giving has spiked. The stock market has remained high, and loyal donors have continued giving. Some donor's priorities have shifted, and Foundations have tended to become less restrictive in this environment. Younger donors, donors in hard-hit industries, and those who have previously given less than \$100 are tending not to donate at this time. She stressed the importance of volunteers and the need to adjust and enhance

outreach to donors and listening to their feedback. Retaining donors and upgrading should be a top priority, as well as an institutional focus on diversity.

V. NEXT STEPS/ADJOURN

Co-Chair Dr. Monroe Harris, Jr. closed the meeting with a note of appreciation for the leadership of the Campaign Committee members that brought us to the successful conclusion of the fiscal year. Dr. Harris offered thanks to Co-Chairs Elizabeth Locke and John Staelin for their leadership and recent significant contribution to the campaign, and thanked Virginia's Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne for his support of the museum as well. He next reflected on his and Dr. Jill Bussey Harris's decision to make a campaign commitment to name a gallery space in the expansion. They have been impressed by the progress of the museum over the last several years, and have enjoyed working with Director Alex Nyerges. The museum's commitment to African and African American Art and its embrace of diversity and inclusion long before others is appreciated. The campus has become an oasis during this pandemic, even more so than before, and another reason to enjoy the institution. The meeting adjourned at 5:09pm.

Recorded by: Karen McGill
Executive Administrator to the Chief Development Officer and Deputy Director for
Advancement