

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the Campaign Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 24, 2024, 10:00am
Claiborne Robinson Room

There were present:

Lynette Allston, Trustee President, Ex-officio
Anne Noland Edwards

Absent:

Jil Harris
Cindy Conner

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director and Chief Executive Officer
Jay Adams
Kay Baker
Carol Ann Bischoff
Kathryn Blessing
Caprice Bragg
Sarah Burgess
David Cary
Jasmonn Coleman
Stephanie Cooperstein
Kristine Craig
Bonnie Devlin, Washburn & McGoldrick
Erin Elder
Mary Frediani
Martha Glasser
Tom Gutenberger
Andrew Harris
Monroe Harris, Co-Chair
Jan Hatchette
Marie Hawthorne
Ukay Jackson
Jim Klaus
Karen McGill
Jen Merritt
Caroline Nichols
Lizzie Oliver
Celia Rafalko
Joey Smith
John Staelin, Co-Chair
Michael Taylor
May Wells

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Lynette Allston called the meeting to order at 10:03am.

II. WELCOME

Co-Chair Dr. Monroe Harris welcomed committee members and other guests to the meeting. He reviewed the agenda and announced and thanked fellow Co-Chairs John Staelin and Elizabeth Locke for a generous additional gift to the campaign.

III. EXPANSION AND RENOVATION UPDATE

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) Director and Chief Executive Officer Alex Nyerges reported on the expansion and renovation project. With the addition of approximately 173,000 square feet, VMFA will become the fourth largest comprehensive art museum in the country by square footage. SmithGroup is making excellent progress on the preliminary design phase, which is expected to be complete in November 2024. They are working closely with VMFA Artistic Director and Chief Curator Dr. Michael Taylor and the curatorial and design teams to plan the galleries and adjacent spaces. Once complete, the preliminary drawings will be submitted to the Division of Engineering and Buildings for approval.

The Leslie Cheek Theater renovation has encountered delays but will be substantially complete by the third week of October in time for *Fine Arts & Flowers 2024*.

IV. CAMPAIGN UPDATE

VMFA Chief Development Officer and Deputy Director for Advancement Tom Gutenberger reported that more than \$19 million has been raised since the last Campaign Committee meeting. As of August 30, 2024, the campaign fundraising total was \$345,456.743 and membership exceeded 32,000 households. Plans are underway for the public launch of the comprehensive campaign in fall 2025. The Advancement team also continues to focus on fundraising for exhibitions, growing corporate partnerships, expanding membership and targeted upgrades, and planning events in Richmond and key regions across Virginia.

V. EXHIBITION PRESENTATION

Dr. Taylor reviewed the photography exhibitions opening October 5, 2024, *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy* and *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845*, noting that these fulfill VMFA's goal of having curators develop major exhibitions with scholarly catalogues that can travel to other venues. He also announced that, after five years of planning, VMFA will be one of only two venues for a major Frida Kahlo exhibition. *Frida: Beyond the Myth*, organized by the Dallas Museum of Art, will be on view at VMFA from April 5 to September 28, 2025, with an anticipated attendance of 165,000 visitors during the six-month run. The selection of 60 works includes rarely traveled self-portraits and still lifes, as well as photographs of the artist from museums and private collections in Mexico. Exhibition labels, an audio tour, and other materials will be available in both English and Spanish, providing an opportunity to attract visitors from

Hispanic and Spanish-speaking communities. *Impressionist Revolution: Monet to Matisse from the Dallas Museum of Art* has been rescheduled to November 14, 2026 to February 14, 2027. *Reunited: The Ludwig and Rosy Fischer Collection*, curated by VMFA Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Dr. Sarah Eckhardt, is planned for fall 2027, followed by a Vincent van Gogh exhibition in 2028.

VI. CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT REPORT

Campaign Consultant Bonnie Devlin, Managing Principal and Co-owner of Washburn & McGoldrick, reflected on the campaign progress to date and offered congratulations on passing the three-quarter mark in fundraising. Ms. Devlin led a discussion on the following three questions:

- What is your favorite thing about VMFA?
- What excites you about what the campaign will bring to VMFA?
- Do you have suggestions for other Campaign Committee members as we approach the public phase?

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Co-Chair John Staelin thanked the presenters, staff, and board members for their enthusiasm and participation in the campaign. As excitement for the public launch builds in this final year of the leadership phase, Mr. Staelin encouraged everyone to consider upcoming *Fine Arts & Flowers* events as opportunities to introduce new people to the museum. A final word of thanks was offered to Mr. Nyerges and Ms. Kathryn Gray for their recent \$1 million campaign pledge, which will name one of the expansion's new photography galleries.

VIII. ADJOURN

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved by the committee at 10:58am.

Recorded by Caroline Nichols,
Manager of Advancement Communication