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Carol and Bill Eckerle Make Multi-Million Dollar Legacy Gift to Cincinnati Museums

CINCINNATI —October 5, 2023— In a generous demonstration of their belief in access to culture and education for every member of our community, Carol and William “Bill” Eckerle have left an \$18 million gift to three leading Cincinnati institutions. Bequests of roughly \$6 million each will support the endowments of the Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati Museum Center and the Taft Museum of Art.

Bill Eckerle passed away nearly one year ago. He was preceded in death by Carol in 2020.

“The Eckerles had the foresight and philanthropic spirit to make planned gifts to the Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati Museum Center and the Taft Museum of Art,” shared David Hausrath, member of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Finance Committee, Taft Museum of Art and Member of the Board of Directors and Chair of Investment Committee, Cincinnati Museum Center. “Museums held a special place in their hearts, and they knew that their gift would leave a lasting legacy on these cultural institutions, providing for long-term financial sustainability that is so crucial for our nonprofits and the communities they serve.”

Mr. and Mrs. Eckerle were familiar faces at the Cincinnati Art Museum for many years, regularly attending events and building community with its staff and supporters.

“Carol and Bill had an abiding interest in the youth of our region and providing opportunities to build a better Cincinnati from the universal starting point of individual respect. Their gift amplifies the power of art to interweave our community and is characteristic of the embrace they felt for our museums. I will forever remember the warmth and optimism that surrounded them at every event and occasion at the Cincinnati Art Museum,” remarked Cameron Kitchin, Louis and Louise Dieterle Nippert Director.

At Cincinnati Museum Center, the Eckerles particularly enjoyed immersing themselves in—and furthering their education about—Cincinnati history, in which they took a great deal of pride.

“Bill and Carol were devoted friends of Cincinnati and our community history. They loved exploring the treasures of our collections and seeing history in immersive detail on our *Public Landing* and at the opening of our *Made in Cincinnati* exhibit last fall. Bill was proud of what this region has accomplished and was so touched to know that his University of Cincinnati fraternity brother Tom Huenefeld had made possible through his bequest,” said Elizabeth Pierce, president & CEO of Cincinnati Museum Center. “Bill and Carol were lovely people and I’m grateful I had the chance to know them for many years through Cincinnati Museum Center, and that our community will get to know our city’s art and culture through them.”

Shortly after her arrival at the Taft Museum of Art in the fall of 2022, Rebekah Beaulieu, PhD, Louise Taft Semple President & CEO, met Mr. Eckerle and discussed the institution’s incredible potential for its future endeavors.

“In a small but meaningful gesture, Bill visited the Taft last winter to welcome me to the museum and express his love for this institution,” shared Dr. Beaulieu. “As our team at the Taft is actively embracing the next chapter of the museum, I often think back to that conversation. We bonded over the untapped

potential to improve the experience of the museum for our community members, within and beyond our walls. In welcoming the city's newest face to the table and in this selfless act of philanthropy, Bill's generosity will continue to be transformational. The Eckerles believed in continuing a legacy, as well as steadfast commitment to ensure a thriving arts scene and vibrant community. We couldn't be more grateful to be a part of that work."

About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

Free general admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is made possible by a gift from the Rosenthal Family Foundation. Exhibition pricing may vary. Parking is free. cincinnatiartmuseum.org

About Cincinnati Museum Center

Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC) at Union Terminal is a nationally recognized, award-winning institution housed in a National Historic Landmark. CMC is a vital community resource that sparks curiosity, inspiration, epiphany and dialogue. CMC was awarded the 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Service from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and received accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums in 2012, one of a select few museums in the nation to receive both honors. Organizations within CMC include the [Cincinnati History Museum](#), [Museum of Natural History & Science](#), [The Children's Museum](#), [Robert D. Lindner Family OMNIMAX® Theater](#), [Cincinnati History Library and Archives](#) and the [Geier Collections and Research Center](#). Housed in historic Union Terminal – a National Historic Landmark restored in 2018 and recognized as the nation's 45th most important building by the American Institute of Architects – CMC welcomes more than 1.8 million visits annually, making it one of the most visited museums in the country. For more information, visit cincymuseum.org.

About the Taft Museum of Art

The Taft Museum of Art is recognized nationally as a museum leader that passionately engages people with the arts as envisioned by our founders, Anna Sinton Taft and Charles Phelps Taft. Today, the Taft is now one of the most unique art museums in America and holds National Historic Landmark status for both its historic house and Duncanson murals.

Here, you'll find gems nestled into every nook and cranny with stories that have endured for generations. Our 200-year-old house holds a remarkable collection that spans the Middle Ages through the 19th century with European and American paintings, and 18th-century watches, Chinese porcelains, and French Renaissance enamels. The collection features iconic artists including Rembrandt, Goya, Gainsborough, Turner, Ingres, Whistler, and Sargent, as well as Federal-period American furniture and the most significant pre-Civil War domestic murals in the United States.

Restored and reinterpreted for the next century, visitors can enjoy special exhibitions, our beautiful outdoor garden, our Museum Shop and Lindner Family Café, events and programming for all ages—and so much more. Within our galleries and beyond our walls, the Taft Museum of Art is a one-of-a-kind, multi-sensory experience that puts you at the center of art and history. For more information, visit taftmuseum.org.