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### **The Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Celebrates Historic Opening**

April 22, 2023 (LITTLE ROCK, Ark.) – The Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts (AMFA) today celebrated its historic grand opening, following an almost four-year renovation and reimagining of the former Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock. The new museum is the result of a successful public and private partnership to fund the building’s design and construction.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by 500 members of the local community and surrounding region. Honored guests were Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr., reflecting the significant role AMFA is expected to play as a premier cultural destination and anchor in the state capital.

Additional remarks were delivered by AMFA executive director Dr. Victoria Ramirez, while the museum’s Capital Campaign co-chairs, Harriet and Warren Stephens, announced a final campaign total of \$170.8 million, which far exceeded the original project goal of \$66 million.

#### **Highlighted Remarks:**

- **Governor Sanders:**  
“To the entire Little Rock community, thank you for coming together to put the fine arts front and center in our city,” said Governor Sanders. “All of this museum’s supporters are tied together by a common thread: that Arkansas deserves a world-class capital city. One with access to the best artwork and the best art facilities in the country. This isn’t just an investment in our generation – it’s an investment in our children’s generation too.”
- **Mayor Scott:**  
“We are creating a gateway to the future for our city through arts and culture. We do this together as we open a new era for the city of Little Rock with this anchor institution in the heart of downtown. It’s something every one of us can be proud of.”
- **Dr. Victoria Ramirez:**  
“We proudly offer free admission to everyone, every day – a significant commitment to this community... and an affirmation that the museum is a place for all.”

- **Harriet Stephens:**  
“AMFA is a testament to the generosity and vision of the people of Little Rock, the state of Arkansas, and beyond who have lent their support as patrons, donors, contributors, and friends. It is a testament to the great love many of us shared for the Arkansas Arts Center, upon which AMFA is built.”
- **Warren Stephens:**  
“I want every one of these donors and organizations to know how grateful we are – and how grateful future generations of Arkansans and visitors will be for their support.”

Three winners of a statewide school lottery, one each from Carver STEAM Magnet Elementary, Horace Mann Arts & Science Magnet Middle School, and Central High School, had the honor of being the museum’s first admitted guests. Nearly 4,000 visitors toured the new campus. True to AMFA’s commitment to making art accessible to all, admission was – and will remain – free.

AMFA’s 133,000-square-foot campus includes cultivated acreage in MacArthur Park; The Harriet and Warren Stephens Galleries with collections, exhibitions, installations, and pieces on loan across eight galleries that honor individuals and organizations integral to the museum’s history; a Performing Arts Theater, the Windgate Art School, the Cultural Living Room, AMFA’s signature community space; the Terri and Chuck Erwin Collections Research Center; the Governor Winthrop Rockefeller Lecture Hall; and a Museum Store and restaurant, Park Grill. The museum’s art collection spans the 1300s to present day, with 14,000 works.

*Art Garden*, a massive community-built, large-scale outdoor art installation, was also unveiled. Made through a collaboration with 82 schools, universities, and partner organizations across the state, *Art Garden* is a celebration of community. With the estimated participation of 12,000 Arkansans and using MacArthur Park as its canvas, *Art Garden* honors the museum’s legacy of community engagement and arts education with more than 10,000 origami lotuses.

The Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts will begin regular museum hours May 2: Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., and Sunday from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. AMFA encourages guests to reserve tickets for the inaugural season. Please visit [AMFA’s website](#) for tickets, as well as additional information on memberships, programs, and events.

Press photos may be accessed in the [press kit](#).

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**About the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts:**

Founded in 1937, the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts is the largest cultural institution of its kind in the state, offering a unique blend of visual and performing arts experiences. AMFA is committed to featuring diverse media and artistic perspectives within its permanent collection of 14,000 works of art as well as through rotating temporary exhibitions. AMFA’s international collection spans eight centuries, with strengths in works on paper and contemporary craft, and includes notable holdings by artists from Arkansas, the South, and across the United States and Europe. With a vibrant mix of ideas, cultures, people, and places, AMFA extends this commitment to diversity through its dynamic children’s theatre and performing arts program, the innovative Windgate Art School, and community-focused educational programs for all ages. Located in Little Rock’s oldest urban green space, MacArthur Park, AMFA’s landmark building and grounds are designed by Studio Gang and SCAPE, in collaboration with Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects.