

Women in the Arts

Donor Profile

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Jim and Suzanne Mellor

On National Museum of Women in the Art's 2006 White Nights Baltic endowment cruise, Wilhelmina Cole Holladay spoke about a hoped-for annual scholarly project that would underwrite the publication of the definitive book on a woman artist who had made a major contribution to the history of art. The books as research tools would bring the museum to a new level of recognition in the scholarly art world. Afterward, Jim Mellor told Mrs. Holladay that he and Suzanne would be benefactors of that project. The Mellor Prize was established to provide

\$50,000 yearly for ten years to document the work of ten historic women artists.

Suzanne and Jim Mellor explain, “Our philanthropic focus has been on education and the arts. This prize combines the two and meets those goals in a most unique way.” They add, “The Mellor Prize should help facilitate NMWA to achieve greater recognition and allow it to reach a new plateau in the art and education community.”

Mrs. Holladay, Chair of the Board, said, “We are deeply indebted for this wonderful gift. With this generous donation the museum will be able to continue to develop its potential and more fully realize its *raison d’etre*.”

Suzanne Mellor’s love for the visual arts began during her childhood in Detroit. Field trips to the Detroit Institute of Art made a lasting impression, and she embarked on her life-long commitment to the arts. She has studied at the Art League and Otis Art Institute in Southern California. The Ira Roberts Galleries, Beverly Hills has, published her paintings as art prints and greeting cards, and her work has been exhibited in Beverly Hills, New York City, Dallas, Minneapolis and Dayton. Her paintings are in private collections worldwide.

In the early 1980’s, Suzanne responded to the National Museum of Women in the Arts’ request for donations to facilitate its opening. She recognized the importance of the museum’s mission, being the first to focus solely on women artists. When her husband, Jim, Chairman of General Dynamics, moved the corporation to Washington D.C., a mutual friend of Suzanne’s and NMWA President Emerita Carole Lascaris’s arranged for them to meet Wilhelmina Cole Holladay. Suzanne became a passionate supporter of the museum. In 1991, Mrs., Holladay asked her to join its National Advisory Board, in which she continues to participate.

Jim has served on the Board of Trustees of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, as trustee of Ford’s Theater, on the Exhibitor’s Circle of the National Gallery of Art, and he is an appointee of the National Endowment for the Humanities. After retiring from General Dynamics in 1997, he became Chairman of USEC, Inc., Bethesda, and of Amerisource Bergen, Philadelphia.

The Mellors reside in Laguna Beach, California where Impressionist painters lived in the early twentieth century. The couple generously supports several artistic institutions in Orange County, including the award-winning Laguna Playhouse, where they serve on the Board of Trustees. Jim is on the Board of Directors at the University of California, Irvine, while Suzanne serves on the Dean’s Council of the college’s School of Art. They support the Orange County Performing Arts Center, and Suzanne is active at the Orange County Museum of Art.

Liz Goldner, Laguna Beach, California