STUART FAMILY FOUNDATION MAKES GIFT TO FRED JONES JR. MUSEUM OF ART ADDITION

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NORMAN – University of Oklahoma Regent Jon R. Stuart and his wife, Dee Dee, of Tulsa, have made a $3 million lead gift from the Stuart Family Foundation to the expansion project for the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, OU President David Boren announced at the December meeting of the OU Board of Regents.

“Once again, when the University needed support for an important project, Jon and Dee Dee Stuart have come forward,” said Boren. He noted that less than a year ago, the Stuarts made a $500,000 challenge grant to the successful Reforestation Campaign to replace OU trees lost in the historic, December 2007 ice storm. The Stuarts also provided funds for the Stuart Landing, a focal point of Oklahoma Memorial Union; the Seed Sower statue, which stands at the gates of the South Oval; and numerous other gifts.

Boren explained that the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art expansion process started with planning for a gallery to house the Adkins Collection, an acclaimed private collection of works by the Taos artists as well as Native American works of art.

A new gallery dedicated to the Adkins Collection was part of the agreement made when OU and the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa were awarded the collection by the Adkins Foundation in Tulsa. The partnership between OU and the Philbrook Museum prevailed in a competition among leading art museums in the country.
A self-professed fan of American art, Regent Stuart said, “Being awarded the Adkins Collection is not only great for the University of Oklahoma and the Philbrook Museum, but it is a wonderful result for the entire state of Oklahoma.”

Boren said, “In the process of planning the Adkins Gallery, we recognized a unique opportunity to add an additional major, new gallery to enable OU to pursue the acquisition of other important collections of art works and make much-needed renovations to the original 1971 building. At the current time, the museum does not have enough space to display even its current collection.

“Jon Stuart, an important part of our successful Adkins Collection proposal, and Dee Dee, a member of the art museum’s Board of Visitors, were the first people to step forward with a lead gift,” said Boren. “We appreciate the ongoing support of Jon and Dee Dee and the service and leadership they lend to so many University efforts.”

The project will add the Adkins Gallery and another new gallery for future acquisitions on the second floor of the art museum, create a major new staircase leading to the galleries, upgrade the Nancy Johnston Records Gallery in the original museum, and reconfigure “back of the house” spaces for building display items and caring for the artworks.

The $3 million gift from the Stuart Family Foundation marks the launching of additional private fundraising for the $13 million project.

Museum director Ghislain d’Humières noted that combining these projects with the Adkins Gallery project makes them vastly more affordable than if they were done at a separate time.

“We have a rare opportunity to bring the rest of the museum up to the level of the newer Mary and Howard Lester Wing,” said d’Humières. “We are so grateful to the Stuarts, who have launched the fundraising for this project in such a generous way.”

President Boren noted that in appreciation for the gift, the new 18,000-square-foot wing, featuring the new Adkins Gallery as well as a second new gallery, and the museum administrative offices, will be named The Stuart Wing.

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