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LAWRENCE J. WHEELER
DIRECTOR

Lawrence J. Wheeler was named director of the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) in October 1994. Since that time, the Museum has become one of the leading art museums in the American South. Its program of major exhibitions, ranging from presentations of the work of Rodin, Monet, and the School of Paris to ancient Egyptian art, have attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Museum from across the nation and around the world.

Prior to joining the Museum, Dr. Wheeler was Director of Development at the Cleveland Museum of Art from 1985 to 1994. From 1977 to 1985, he served as Deputy Secretary for the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, where he was responsible for overseeing the construction of the original NCMA building.

Under Dr. Wheeler's leadership of the North Carolina Museum of Art, in 2006, the Museum unveiled its much-anticipated design for an ambitious expansion. Dr. Wheeler's vision for a spacious, light-filled structure to house the Museum's collection became a reality upon completion of the building in spring 2010. Today, the 127,000-square-foot West Building, surrounded by sculpture gardens and reflecting pools, presents works drawn from the institution's outstanding permanent collection of more than 5,000 objects spanning the periods from antiquity to the present day. The expansion initiative also transformed the Museum's original building into a center for temporary exhibitions, collections management, education, and administration.

Dr. Wheeler has worked to develop the Museum's collection, including securing a gift of 29 Rodin sculptures from the Cantor Foundation, making the NCMA the largest repository of Rodin's work in the American South. He has also helped to build the modern and contemporary collections substantially: Numerous recent acquisitions include works by El Anatsui, Richard Diebenkorn, Ellsworth Kelly, Anselm Kiefer, Robert Motherwell, Roxy Paine, Jaume Plensa, Gerhard Richter, Sean Scully, and Ursula von Rydingsvard.

Dr. Wheeler's awards include the Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters from the Republic of France, the Medal of Arts from the city of Raleigh, the Leadership Award from *The Triangle Business Journal*, the Design Guild Award from the North Carolina State University College of Design, and the Thad

Eure Memorial Award from the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau. In December 2000, he was named Tar Heel of the Year by the Raleigh *News and Observer*, which called him “the godfather of the Triangle’s cultural boom” and cited his skill at melding “arts, politics and commerce into a powerful new cultural force.”

Lawrence Wheeler grew up in Lakeland, Florida. He has Bachelor of Arts degrees in History and French from Pfeiffer College, and a Masters of Arts and Ph.D. in European history from the University of Georgia.

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Press Information

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