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### **Jim and Betty Becher Curator of American Art Created at the North Carolina Museum of Art**

**Raleigh, N.C.** – The North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) announces the establishment of the Jim and Betty Becher Curator of American Art, the first endowed position of its kind at the Museum. This prestigious position will be held by the NCMA’s Director for Collections and Research John W. Coffey, who has worked at the Museum since 1988.

“We are very grateful to Jim and Betty Becher for this leadership gift, which will help assure the future and excellence of the NCMA’s American art collection,” says Lawrence J. Wheeler, director of the NCMA. “This endowed curatorship will enable the Museum to build both the collection and educational program of American art into one of the finest in the Southeast.”

The Museum’s [American art](#) collection encompasses paintings and sculpture from the late colonial period (mid-18th century) to the evolution of modernism in first decades of the 20th century. Included are important works by John Singleton Copley, Winslow Homer, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Frederick Frieseke, George Bellows, Paul Manship, Marsden Hartley, Aaron Douglas, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Andrew Wyeth. The collection addresses many of the important themes and subjects of American art history, such as the celebration of wilderness and the search for a national identity; the conflicts over race, immigration, and social class; and the rapid evolution of society from Jefferson’s republic of farmers to Henry Ford’s industrial dynamo.

“Betty and I are very pleased to support John Coffey and the NCMA’s excellent permanent collection by endowing this important curatorial position,” said Jim Becher. “I see this endowment as an essential contribution to one of the Museum’s most beloved and important areas of collection and focus. Additionally, this will allow the Museum to recruit from the most outstanding curators in the field when, alas, John eventually retires.”



The curatorial endowment program at the NCMA presents donors with an exceptional opportunity to permanently support the position of the curators at the Museum. Income from the endowment can provide salary, professional travel, research and publication support, and assist in art conservation needs and educational programming related to the art collection.

For more information on the NCMA’s collection of American art, visit the [Museum website](#).

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### **Image Caption**

Jim and Betty Becher pictured at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

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### **About the North Carolina Museum of Art**

The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum opened West Building, home to the permanent collection, in 2010. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Roy Cooper, governor, and an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Susi Hamilton, secretary.