

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART AWARDS MEDALS TO LEADERS IN CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO EDUCATION

Washington, D.C. – The National Gallery of Art presented its Medal for Distinguished Service to Education in Art to Charles R. Lee, chairman and chief executive officer of GTE Corporation; Lucio A. Noto, chairman and chief executive officer of Mobil Corporation; and Edmond J. and Lily Safra, Republic National Bank New York, on September 22, 1999. The presentations were made by Gallery president Robert H. Smith at the opening dinner for the exhibition, The Drawings of Annibale Carracci, made possible by Republic National Bank of New York, and Safra Republic Holdings S.A., Luxembourg.

“What distinguishes our recipients tonight is that each has understood the importance of corporate identity with the arts. They recognize the importance of beauty to the needs of the spirit and to the nurturing of creative souls,” said Smith.

All four recipients have a long tradition of partnership with the Gallery. Their corporations sponsor major exhibitions and support educational programs and materials, such as teaching packets, brochures, and virtual classrooms, that complement the exhibitions.

CHARLES R. LEE

GTE Corporation has been a major supporter of the Gallery for the past twenty years. Its continued commitment is a result of Chuck Lee’s leadership in art and education. “We combine support for the arts with support for other aspects of education because society needs that cultural and ethical framework,” said Lee.

The ten major exhibitions sponsored by GTE are Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European and American Paintings (1880–1906) (1980), Mauritshuis: Dutch Painting of the Golden Age from the Royal Picture Gallery, The Hague (1982), Art of Aztec Mexico: Treasures of Tenochtitlan (1983-84), Henri Matisse: The Early Years in Nice 1916-1930 (1986-87), Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane (1988), Masterpieces of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: The Annenberg Collection (1990), Art for the Nation: Gifts in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art (1991), Great French Paintings from the Barnes Foundation: Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Early Modern (1993), Winslow Homer (1995-96), and Alexander Calder: 1898–1976 (1998). GTE Corporation will also sponsor Art for the Nation: Collecting for a New Century, scheduled to open in October 2000.

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During the Calder exhibition, GTE and the Gallery launched a virtual classroom on the Web for selected middle schools and high schools in communities where the company has offices. GTE has also made donations to the Gallery's Patrons' Permanent Fund and New Century Fund campaigns and has supported the Collectors Committee since 1980.

LUCIO A. NOTO

Mobil's partnership with the Gallery reflects Lucio A. Noto's sense of purpose. According to Noto, "In this shrinking world, we need well-informed, open-minded people who understand each other and appreciate each other's values. That is what exposure to the arts produces." Noto and his wife Joan are longtime supporters of the Gallery. He has been a member of the Gallery's Trustees' Council since 1996 and is an advisor to the Finance Committee of the Gallery's Board of Trustees.

Exhibitions sponsored by Mobil have enabled visitors to explore diverse cultures. They include Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images (1978-79), The Sculpture of Indonesia (1990), The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century (1995) and Mark Rothko (1998). Mobil has also supported educational film projects related to the exhibitions, including The Search for Alexander (1980), Süleyman the Magnificent (1987), and Art of Indonesia: Tales from the Shadow World (1990). This year Mobil is among the supporters for the Gallery's upcoming film on the only painting by Leonardo da Vinci in the western hemisphere, Ginevra de' Benci (c. 1474), which is in the National Gallery's collection.

EDMOND J. AND LILY SAFRA

For more than two decades, Edmond J. and Lily Safra have supported ten exhibitions at the Gallery, as well as the Gallery's Fund for the International Exchange of Art. "To partake in the Gallery's exquisite exhibitions was every time the realization of a wonderful dream," said Lily Safra.

The Safras' gifts are made through Republic New York Corporation, its primary subsidiary, Republic National Bank New York, and other Safra banks. Edmond Safra founded Republic New York and served as its honorary chairman and principal shareholder for more than thirty years. Among the Gallery exhibitions they have sponsored are An American Perspective: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Art from the Collection of JoAnn and Julian Ganz, Jr. (1981-82), Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration (1991-92), John Singleton Copley in England (1995-96), Bernini's Rome: Italian Baroque Terracottas from The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (1998-99), and The Drawings of Annibale Carracci (1999-2000).

PAST RECIPIENTS

Past recipients of the Gallery's Medal for Distinguished Service to Education in Art include, in 1997, Ruth Carter Stevenson, art collector and National Gallery trustee emerita; in 1988, Katherine Graham, chairman of the executive committee of The Washington Post Company, Gallery benefactor, and member of the Gallery's Collectors Committee; in 1976, John Walker, former Gallery director; in 1971, Sir Kenneth Clark, for his television series Civilisation; and in 1966, Erwin Panofsky, professor emeritus, Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton.

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