



Donor Wall Unveiling

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on November 11, 2009**



This speech was presented to attendees of the unveiling for the Wolfsonian Museum's donor wall on November 11, 2009.

On behalf of Florida International University, its Board of trustees, students, faculty and administration, thank you for coming tonight.

We are here to recognize those individuals, family foundations, and corporations whose longstanding commitment has enabled The Wolfsonian to flourish as an international center of excellence for the study and appreciation of modern art and design, and as a community cultural and educational treasure that attracts thousands of visitors from around the world.

All honorees tonight have a special connection to The Wolfsonian – you are the first generation of donors who have helped transform a private man's vision into a cornerstone of Florida International University. The Wolfsonian is one of the crown jewels of our university and the south Florida community. Florida International University is grateful for your early belief in and commitment to The Wolfsonian.

We hope you as are proud of what The Wolfsonian has done with your investment of funds, time, and enthusiasm as we are of what it has accomplished.

The Wolfsonian turns 14 at midnight, so this is a good time to look back on some of what has been accomplished over those few short years:

- **Inaugural Exhibition** – November 11, 1995
 - *The Arts of Reform and Persuasion, 1885-1945.*
 - Then Chase Bank sponsored the exhibit
 - and its award winning catalog.
- **Joining FIU** – In 1997 The Wolfsonian became a department of FIU, following Micky Wolfson's gift of his collection, and its historic building.
- **International Fellowship Program** - Since 1995 the fellowship program has hosted more than 70 scholars and museum professionals from around the country and abroad.
- **Accreditation** – July 1999 by the American Association of Museums. 776 out of the 8,000 museums in the United States are accredited and initial accreditation was accomplished in only 3 years!
The Journal Of Decorative And Propaganda Arts - Since 1986 DAPA has fostered new scholarship for the period 1875 to 1945 and garnered national and international recognition.

- **Online Public Catalog** – More than 35,000 electronic images from the Wolfsonian library, and object collection are available online and this grows daily.
- **School-Based Programs** – The museum has become an active partner with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Museum Education Program, through its innovative programs such as *Page at a Time* and *Artful Truth* involving K-12 students and teachers, mostly dealing with at risk schools.
- **Major Grants** – John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation. The latter awarded a \$500,000 grant just this year.
- **Awards** -
 - The American Association of Museums Design Award
 - George Wittenborn Memorial Award (Art Libraries Assoc. of No. America)
 - AIGA Award – the professional association for design
 - Mary Ellen LoPresti Award for excellence in art publishing
- **Growth of the Collection** – Examples include:
 - The dramatic ornamental finial from the 1913 Woolworth Building – New York’s so-called Cathedral of Commerce. This was a gift from Chase Manhattan Bank.
 - Gustav Stickley’s Eastwood model 2638 armchair, a rare example of his early work, and a gift from Gregg Seibert.
 - A TECO Pottery "Swirl Base" vase and a Tiffany Favrile "Cypriote" glass vase, both major gifts, again from Gregg Seibert.
- **Traveling Exhibitions** – Exhibitions have traveled to important museums including the Carnegie Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Seattle Art Museum, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Canadian Centre for Architecture, the Rhode Island School of Design, and others
- **Loans to major institutions – Objects from the collection have been loaned to:**
 - Smithsonian Institution
 - Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum
 - Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
 - National Gallery
 - Whitney Museum of Art
 - German Historical Museum (Berlin)
 - Victoria and Albert Museum

As well as museums in London, Nürnberg, Paris, Brussels, and Tokyo, among others Clearly, The Wolfsonian has achieved much in its short life. I think you will all agree that the institution has matured as a major local, national, and international asset that must be celebrated, stewarded and supported.

I call on all of you to continue your partnership with Florida International University to guarantee The Wolfsonian an even brighter future. With additional support and a solid endowment, its potential is boundless.