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## **Morse Museum's Independence Day Open House Marks Its 20th Year on Park Avenue**

*Note to editors: Attached are two high-resolution images. One shows the Park Avenue block between Canton and Cole Avenues before the Morse Museum's current galleries were built. The other shows the museum building today.*

WINTER PARK, Fla.—The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art will celebrate its 20th anniversary on Park Avenue with this year's annual Independence Day Open House Saturday, July 4th.

Over the course of the last 20 years, the Morse has expanded both physical space and programs and seen awareness of its collection grow far beyond Central Florida's boundaries. For its 20th anniversary on Park, the Morse will be open for free from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in conjunction with Winter Park's Olde Fashioned July 4th Celebration in Central Park—a city tradition that began when the Morse opened the doors of its new Park Avenue galleries on July 4, 1995.

The city celebration, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., includes a bicycle parade from City Hall, Clydesdale horse-drawn wagon rides, live patriotic music by the Bach Festival Society Choir and Brass Ensemble and much more.

The Morse's galleries at 445 North Park Ave. were developed from former bank and office buildings. The redesign linked two buildings with a tower in a modified Mediterranean style meant to blend with the surrounding cityscape. Today, after two

major expansions, the Museum has more than 19,000 square feet of exhibition and public space—almost five times the gallery and public space in its former location on Welbourne Avenue.

Attendance to the museum has increased from just over 18,000 in 1994 to more than 79,000 in 2014.

The museum houses the world's most comprehensive collection of works by artist Louis Comfort Tiffany, whose innovations in glass design more than a century ago were recognized as a unique American art form.

For the 2015 Independence Day Open House, the Morse invites the public see the collection for free, either revisiting the museum—a gift to the community by Hugh and Jeannette McKean—or experiencing it for the first time. It will be a time to enjoy the Tiffany Chapel, installed in 1999, and the museum wing that opened in 2011 to provide more than 6,000 square feet of permanent exhibition space for the art and architectural elements that survive from Tiffany's Long Island estate, Laurelton Hall.

The museum's newest exhibitions, assembled from objects in the permanent collection, include *Revival and Reform—Eclecticism in the 19th-Century Environment*, featuring 20 leaded-glass windows and panels; *The Bride Elect—Gifts from the 1905 Wedding of Elizabeth Morse Genius*, a display of the luxury items given to Charles Hosmer Morse's daughter when she married in Chicago; and *Selections from the Harry C. Sigman Gift of European and American Decorative Art*, an informal preview of a recent donation that has further strengthened the museum's collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century objects.

Jeannette Genius McKean founded the museum—formerly known as the Morse Gallery of Art—on the Rollins College campus in 1942. The museum was relocated to Welbourne Avenue in 1977, and its name was changed to the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art.

Since its opening on Park Avenue 20 years ago, the museum has worked to strengthen both the aesthetic and scholarly quality of the exhibitions it mounts from the collection that the McKeans assembled over a 50-year period. The expansion of public programs includes an audio tour and curator tours of the Laurelton Hall exhibition, free lectures and films, live music on selected free Friday nights, and free summer family tours and activities.

The Morse Museum is owned and operated by the Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation and receives additional support from the Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation. It receives no public funds. For more information, visit [www.morsemuseum.org](http://www.morsemuseum.org) or call (407) 645-5311.

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