



THE CHARLES HOSMER
MORSE MUSEUM
of American Art

Morse Museum Publishes Book on 1893 Tiffany Chapel

WINTER PARK, Fla. (January 13, 2003) – The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art is pleased to announce the publication of *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum*, a 112-page, soft-bound book about the chapel interior Louis Comfort Tiffany created for the 1893 world's fair in Chicago.

Published by the Morse Museum and edited by Nancy Long, former director of public affairs at the Museum, *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum* is an assembly of seven scholarly essays about the Tiffany chapel, its significance, history and conservation by the Morse. The articles are accompanied by more than a hundred color and black-and-white photographs.

"We wanted to produce a book that would meet the needs of scholars and yet serve the general visitor well," said Museum Director Laurence Ruggiero. "We think we've succeeded, and we are thrilled we now have a companion publication to the chapel installation."

Contributing authors are Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, curator in the Department of American Decorative Arts at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City; Wendy Kaplan, department head and curator, Decorative Arts at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Joel M. Hoffman, vice-director, Education and Program Development, Brooklyn Museum of Art; Rustin Levenson, director of Art Conservation Associates, New York City and Miami; John Maseman, director and chief conservator, South Florida Conservation Center; Patricia Pongracz Spicka, curator, The Gallery at the American Bible Society in New York; Laurence Ruggiero, director of the Morse Museum; and Thomas Venturella, owner and chief conservator of the glass conservation firm, Venturella Studio in New York.

The Tiffany Chapel opened to the public at the Morse in April 1999 after almost three years of conservation. The opening marked the first time in more than a century that the general public was able to see the chapel, one of Tiffany's most important interiors.

Jeannette G. McKean (1909-1989), founder of the Morse, and her husband Hugh F. McKean (1908-1995), director of the museum until his death, rescued the chapel in 1959 from Tiffany's burned estate, Laurelton Hall on Long Island. The McKeans were dedicated to the preservation of Tiffany works during a period

when there was little interest in Tiffany. Today the museum houses the world's most comprehensive collection of works by Tiffany.

After the world's fair, the chapel was dismantled and returned to New York. In 1898, Mrs. Celia Whipple Wallace bought the chapel for The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, then under construction in New York City. Though used for worship for about 10 years, by 1916 the chapel was abandoned and deteriorating. Tiffany removed the chapel at his expense, restored it and installed it in a separate building on his estate.

Some 16 years after his death in 1933, his foundation dispersed furnishings of the chapel to various institutions. In 1957, a tragic fire destroyed much of the house. Though the chapel, housed in a separate building on the estate, was not burned, it too fell into disrepair that threatened it with oblivion for the second time in its history.

Shortly after the fire, the McKean's visited Laurelton Hall and brought all they could of surviving objects to Winter Park. This included important leaded-glass windows and a wide variety of architectural elements. Two years later they acquired the remains of the chapel interior, and in the years that followed brought together virtually all the chapel windows and furnishings that had been dispersed earlier and preserved Tiffany's masterwork for future rebuilding.

In 1996, the museum's trustees initiated installation of the chapel in a new wing of the Morse Museum, realizing the McKean's vision of preserving and providing public access to this Tiffany masterpiece in perpetuity.

The book retails for \$24.95 and is available through the Morse Museum shop by calling (407) 645-5316.

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