



THE CHARLES HOSMER
MORSE MUSEUM
of American Art

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art Receives
the Extraordinary American Art Collection of
Theodore E. Stebbins Jr. and Susan Cragg Stebbins**

Note to Editors: Attached is a high-resolution image of Theodore E. Stebbins Jr. and Susan Cragg Stebbins. Images of several paintings in the gift are available via this Dropbox link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7d3r2vyp4nyftmi/AABg2el2ZCP180SIEX2GTcFTa?dl=0>.

WINTER PARK, FL—Theodore E. Stebbins Jr. and Susan Cragg Stebbins have given their outstanding collection of American art to The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art in Winter Park, Florida. The couple have made their gift in honor of Mrs. Stebbins's parents, Evelyn and Henry Cragg, longtime residents of Winter Park. Mr. Cragg was a member of the Charles Homer Morse Foundation board of trustees from its founding in 1976 until his death in 1988.

It is impossible to think about American art scholarship, museum culture, and collecting without the name Theodore Stebbins coming to mind. Stebbins has had an illustrious career as a professor of art history and as curator at the Yale University Art Gallery (1968–77), the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1977–2000), and the Harvard Art Museums (2001–14). Many of Stebbins's former students occupy positions of importance throughout the art world. Among his numerous publications are his broad survey of American works on paper, *American Master Drawings and Watercolors: A History of Works on Paper from Colonial Times to the Present* (1976), and his definitive works on American painter Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904) including the *Life and Work of Martin Johnson Heade* (2000). American art gained recognition beyond the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, furthered by Stebbins's efforts internationally. In 1981, he took to

the People's Republic of China the first exhibition of American paintings ever shown in that country, and, in 1983, his blockbuster exhibition *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting, 1760–1910* was shown in Paris at the invitation of the Musée du Louvre.

Susan Cragg Stebbins, a scholar in literature and Romance languages with a lifelong love for French and Italian culture, was a driving force behind the exhibition *The Lure of Italy*. She and Ted wrote the lead essay in that exhibition catalogue, which became the first American publication ever to win the prestigious Minda de Gunzburg Prize. With Susan's own passions and discerning eye complementing her husband's, the two built an extraordinary collection in which individual works of art are enriched by carefully selected pairings and a heightened sensitivity to the intimate, poetic, and subtly exquisite.

“Susan and I are deeply honored that our collection will find a home at the Morse, a crown jewel among smaller American art museums. We are especially pleased to make this gift in honor of Susan's parents, Henry and Evelyn Cragg, who brought their family up in Winter Park, and who loved everything about the town,” said Theodore Stebbins about the gift.

The gift of 65 works of art (and an additional three future gifts and two long-term loans) includes late 19th-century and early-20th century American sculpture, watercolors, drawings, and paintings by preeminent American masters such as Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) and Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904). John LaFarge (1835–1910) and John Frederick Peto (1854–1907) are also represented in the gift. Paintings by Fidelia Bridges (1834–1923) and the botanical illustrator Ellen Robbins (1828–1905) diversify the Morse's American paintings collection while also illuminating the achievements of these lesser-known artists. The gift contains outstanding works by such artists as Thomas Moran (1837–1926), Worthington Whittredge (1820–1910), and Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823–80).

Dr. Regina Palm, Morse Curator of American Painting and author of the upcoming scholarly catalogue about the Stebbins Collection, said, “The Stebbins Collection represents a wonderful group of 19th-century artists at the height of their abilities. From the collection's inception in the

1960s, the Stebbins have continuously pursued works of art purely on the basis of quality regardless of whether a particular artist was renowned or even completely unknown.”

Dr. Laurence Ruggiero, the Morse Museum’s Director said, “The works of art that make up the Stebbins Collection are exquisite pictures that are not only a delight to the eye but a joy for the mind. Their very generous gift will further enhance our continuing efforts to carry out the vision of the McKeanes to make art an important part of the everyday lives of everyone in our community.”

The Morse Museum was founded by Jeannette Genius McKean (1909–89) in 1942 in honor of her grandfather, and successful industrialist, Charles Hosmer Morse (1833–1921). Her husband, Hugh F. McKean (1908–95) was its first and visionary director from the Museum’s founding until his death in 1995.

“Hugh and Jeannette McKean would be very pleased about this most generous and helpful gift of Ted and Susan Stebbins. All of us at the Morse are deeply grateful to Ted and Susan,” said the Museum’s Chairman of the Board of Trustees Harold Ward III. “Both Hugh and Jeannette were lifelong painters themselves and Hugh often reminded us all that, despite the importance of their Tiffany collection, the Morse should not be just a Tiffany museum.”

The Morse Museum is home to the world’s most comprehensive collection of works by American designer and artist Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933), including the chapel interior he designed for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago and art and architectural objects from Tiffany’s celebrated Long Island home, Laurelton Hall. The Museum's holdings also include American art pottery, late 19th- and early 20th-century American paintings, graphics, and decorative art.

Owned, operated, and funded by the Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, the Museum receives additional support from the Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation. It receives no public funds.

The Morse Museum is open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. All visits are by appointment only. Appointments may be made online by visiting the Museum's "Plan Your Visit" page or by calling (407) 644-1429. Regular admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, \$1 for students, and free for children under 12. More information may be found on the Museum's website, morsemuseum.org.

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