



THE CHARLES HOSMER  
MORSE MUSEUM  
*of American Art*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Art Crimes Cop Robert K. Wittman Will Deliver  
2012 Hugh F. McKean Public Lecture on May 10**

*Editor's Note: An image of Robert K. Wittman is attached to this e-mail. Photo is courtesy of Robert Wittman Inc.*

**WINTER PARK, Fla.**—Robert K. Wittman has been called a “living legend” (*The Wall Street Journal*) and “the most famous detective in the world” (*London Times*). And no wonder. From an original copy of the Bill of Rights to a Rembrandt self-portrait, former FBI Special Agent Wittman helped to recover more than \$300 million in stolen art and cultural property from around the world.

Wittman, the author of a best-selling memoir about his years as the FBI’s senior art crimes investigator, will be in Central Florida May 10 to share the thrills and chills of his undercover sleuthing on multiple continents at the Morse Museum’s Hugh F. McKean Public Lecture.

“Every country has a different cultural heritage and saving these things brings us closer together as human beings,” Wittman says. “When it comes to art, it’s visceral. It affects us in a deeply emotional way.”

Produced in association with Rollins College, the museum’s McKean Public Lecture is being held at 7:30 p.m. in the John M. Tiedtke Concert Hall at Rollins College.

Admission is free. A reception, also open to the public, will follow the lecture. Parking is



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available in the SunTrust Parking Garage in Winter Park, which is accessed via Lyman or Comstock Avenues off of Park Avenue.

Wittman, a high school piano prodigy whose father published an agricultural newspaper and later was an antiques dealer, spent 20 years with the FBI, retiring in 2008. Trained in art, antiques, jewelry and gem identification, he was instrumental in creating the FBI's Art Crime Team after the looting of Bagdad Museum in 2003. Wittman's 2010 memoir, *Priceless: How I Went Undercover to Rescue the World's Stolen Treasures* (Crown), which he coauthored with investigative reporter John Shiffman, relives some of the most exciting moments from his long career.

Through careful investigation, tightly-planned undercover operations, and a little bit of right-place-right-time luck, Wittman and his FBI Art Crime Team returned valuable art objects and antiquities to their proper place. The recoveries included works by Francisco Goya, Auguste Rodin, Rembrandt Van Rijn and Norman Rockwell, plus such treasures as Geronimo's eagle-feather war bonnet, a 2,000-year-old golden pre-Columbian piece of body armor, the original manuscript of Pearl S. Buck's *Good Earth* and one of the 14 original copies of the Bill of Rights.

Wittman today continues to provide art security, protection, and recovery services as an independent consultant in Philadelphia, where he was based with the FBI. He speaks frequently at museums, universities and collectors groups about security techniques and art theft recovery processes.

The Morse initiated its Public Lecture in 2004 to bring speakers to the community whose specialty in art holds relatively broad public interest. The more popular subject matter of these lectures distinguish them from others presented at the Morse, which are also free to the public but more narrow in topic.



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These special presentations of the Morse honor Hugh F. McKean's career as an educator, his love for art, and his vision for enriching the community through the museum with a knowledge and appreciation of art. McKean was president of Rollins College from 1951 to 1969 and the museum's director until his death in 1995.

**About the Morse**

The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art is home to the world's most comprehensive collection of works by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933). The museum's collection includes jewelry, pottery, paintings, art glass, leaded-glass windows and lamps, the chapel interior the artist designed for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and a new wing dedicated to art and architectural objects from Tiffany's Long Island estate Laurelton Hall. The museum's holdings also include a major collection of American art pottery and representative collections of late 19th- and early 20th-century American painting, graphics and decorative art.

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