



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COLUMBUS MUSEUM DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES INTENT TO RETIRE

Tom Butler, Executive Director of the Columbus Museum, will retire after serving in that position for more than 20 years. Butler announced his plans to the Museum's Board of Trustees on March 18, 2014. "Every cultural organization benefits from fresh vision," Butler noted, "and after serving as director for two decades, it just seemed like a good time to retire. I have been very fortunate to have worked with many fine Board leaders and wonderful staff members in my tenure." The Board leadership has asked that Butler remain as Executive Director until a successor is selected.

During Butler's tenure, The Columbus Museum, which strives to bring American art and history to life for the communities of the Chattahoochee Valley, has accomplished much. The Museum's permanent collection has grown from some 5,000 objects to more than 10,000 objects, and the Museum's drawings collection is recognized nationally for its quality and scope. There have also been many significant exhibitions designed to inspire and inform the public. Endowment funds have grown significantly. The revitalized Bradley-Olmstead Gardens are now a major feature of the Museum, with a newly-built entrance, visually dramatic lighting, and new plantings. The children's gallery, *Transformations*, has become a destination for families with young children, and newly-developed plans are in motion to refurbish and refresh that space. In partnership with the Muscogee County School District, the Museum provides educational activities for thousands of school-age children every year.

Butler has many personal accolades and accomplishments. He received the Lifetime Professional Award from the Southeastern Museums Conference and the Georgia Museum Professional of the Year from the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries. He served as President of the Southeastern Museums Association and is a member of the Art Museum Directors Association. He has organized, authored and edited several significant exhibitions and major publications, such as *Lines of Discovery: 225 Years of American Drawings from Columbus Museum* and *American Federal Furniture and Decorative Arts from the Watson Collection*. Most recently Butler has curated *William Beckman: A Drawing Retrospective: 1967-2013*, which will open May 16, 2014 and later be featured at the Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock.

"The Columbus Museum has been very fortunate to have Tom serve as Director for these past two decades", said Board President Trip Tomlinson. "He has been a steady hand, and during his time as Director, the Museum as well as its permanent collection have grown and achieved national stature. We thank him for his service to the Museum and the community."

As an American art and regional history museum, and the second largest general museum in Georgia, the Columbus Museum offers a diverse collection at no charge to the public. For more information about the Columbus Museum please visit www.columbusmuseum.com.

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