



News Release

Wilkes University Announces Strong Commitment to the Arts With Relocation of Sordoni Art Gallery to South Main Street

*Plans Include Bringing National and International Art Exhibits
to Wilkes-Barre*

Wilkes University has announced plans to relocate the Sordoni Art Gallery to South Main Street and bring national and internationally known art exhibits to downtown Wilkes-Barre. Beginning in fall 2016, the gallery will move to 141 South Main St. with an entrance on the new Campus Gateway.

The move is part of a gallery revitalization plan that aims to enrich the arts experience on campus for faculty, staff, and most importantly, students, while contributing to the cultural life of Wilkes-Barre and the Wyoming Valley.

“The plans to re-imagine the Sordoni Art Gallery reflect Wilkes University’s commitment to become one of the finest small universities in the country,” University President Patrick F. Leahy said. “This decision is a win-win because it enhances the student experience as well as the quality of life in Wilkes-Barre.” The decision also supports Wilkes’ strategic plan, which calls for helping to revitalize downtown Wilkes-Barre.

The three-part plan for the gallery came at the encouragement of Andrew J. Sordoni, III whose family established the gallery at Wilkes in 1973. As a member of the Task Force appointed by the president to consider the gallery’s future, he challenged the University to develop a strategy that would better serve both Wilkes students and the surrounding community. Sordoni, who has a distinguished history of supporting the arts, affirmed the new direction for the gallery, saying, “From my experience in the arts, this is extraordinary stewardship. We are going to better serve our students, our community and posterity.”

The first step in the plan calls for creating a permanently dedicated multi-million-dollar exhibiton endowment that will only be used to bring high-quality art exhibits from nationally and internationally known artists. To create this fund, Wilkes will sell most of the collection – a process known as de-accessioning. The sale of art will be combined with the existing endowment to create funds needed for a substantial permanent and dedicated exhibition endowment, which will improve the academic experience of our students, faculty and staff, and enrich the arts experience of our community.

The collection contains 1,500 works of art is estimate to yield around \$1.3 million -- of which approximately 65 comprise the majority of the monetary value. The respected auction house Sotheby’s will assist in selling the collection. No works by



News Release

Wilkes art faculty will be sold. Advising the administration and the Task Force is Dr. Stanly Grand, former director of the Sordoni Art Gallery.

The second part of the plan calls for hiring a highly qualified faculty member to run the art gallery and enhance University arts programming. This faculty member will curate traveling shows, develop academic programming, integrate the gallery into the campus arts community, and help identify new funding sources to enhance the gallery. The faculty salary will be paid for by the university and additional philanthropy.

The final step calls for the Sordoni Art Gallery to be moved to a premier location on campus that will better serve both students and members of the Wilkes-Barre community. In fall 2016, its new location will be 141 South Main Street, at the intersection of South main and the Wilkes Gateway, a major thoroughfare on campus. The building will house both the gallery and the communication studies department, and is adjacent to the Sidhu School of Business, further advancing this area as Wilkes' newest academic corridor. Construction of the new gallery is being paid with university funds.

The gallery will be larger than the current gallery in Stark Learning Center, and outfitted for high-end arts exhibits and include versatile spaces for teaching and entertaining. With entrances on South Main Street and the Gateway and on-site parking, this new location will make the gallery more accessible, more visible and more functional as an academic resource and a downtown enhancement.

About Wilkes University:

Wilkes University is an independent institution of higher education dedicated to academic and intellectual excellence through mentoring in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional programs. Founded in 1933, the university is on a mission to create one of the great small universities, offering all of the programs, activities, and opportunities of a large, research university in the intimate, caring, and mentoring environment of a small, liberal arts college, at a cost that is increasingly competitive with public universities. In addition to 39 undergraduate majors, Wilkes offers the doctor of nursing practice, doctor of education and doctor of pharmacy degrees and more than a dozen master's degree programs, including the master of business administration and master of fine arts in creative writing. Learn more at www.wilkes.edu

###