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Rebecca and Paul Nagy First to Contribute to Harn Museum's Expansion

The Harn's retired director and her husband donated \$1 million toward a new multi-purpose wing that will house a one-of-a-kind Florida-themed art collection.

GAINESVILLE, FL, Oct. 15, 2021—Rebecca Nagy watched over UF's Harn Museum of Art for 16 years as its director. She is now retired and living in Tampa, where her husband Paul is Vice President for Strategic Planning and Analysis at Hillsborough Community College. The Nagys are still looking after the campus treasure. This month, the couple committed \$1 million toward the museum's planned expansion, which will be designed by globally renowned architects Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects | Partners.



Rebecca Nagy, Former Harn Museum of Art Director and Paul Nagy, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Analysis at Hillsborough Community College

The Nagys are the first donors to the museum's exciting expansion project. Their gift will help fund construction of an approximately 20,000-square-foot multi-purpose wing that will permanently display selections from the 1,200 Florida-themed works of art donated to UF last winter by Jacksonville couple Samuel and Roberta Vickers. Additional areas will include a print study room providing UF students and faculty a place to closely analyze selected works of art that connect with class curriculum, a conservation studio for art care specialists to evaluate and conserve works of art, and specialized art storage for the museum's growing collection.

“We have always hoped and dreamed that the University of Florida would become home to the extraordinary

Florida art collection of Sam and Robbie Vickers. After hearing of their momentous gift, we were thrilled to learn that the Harn was building a new wing to house the collection, renowned architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien were chosen for the project, and the capital campaign committee would be chaired by former UF President and First Lady Bernie and Chris Machen,” said Nagy, the museum's director emerita.

“All this inspired us to make a lead gift to the construction fund for the new wing. We are excited to partner with those who will join us in supporting this transformative project for the Harn and the university,” she said.

The new wing is the museum's third expansion since it opened in 1990. While the Harn's director, Nagy twice oversaw expansions of the original museum building: 18,000-square-feet in 2005 for the Harn's contemporary art collection and 26,000-square-feet in 2012 specifically for Asian art. The newest addition is expected to be completed in 2024. The expansion—with gallery spaces, a print study room, conservation studio and storage space—is a cornerstone of the museum's five-year strategic plan.

“Rebecca and Paul are such generous supporters of the museum and have continued to be advocates for the Harn since I came to UF,” said Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield, who was appointed the Harn Museum's director in 2018. “Having Rebecca, as the director emerita, step forward to be the first to invest in the future of a museum she worked so hard to build is an excellent example of philanthropic leadership. There is no better endorsement than that of the Nagys' support. They truly understand what we are working to build at the Harn—a place to serve all generations of art museum visitors from the state of Florida and beyond.”

Nagy, director from 2002-2018, is widely credited for the Harn's continued rise as a nationally respected museum. Under her leadership, works of art in UF's collections grew from approximately 4,700 to 11,100, and visitations climbed to 100,000 patrons each year. Likewise, endowments supporting acquisitions and programs jumped to \$19.2 million.

While UF's president, Machen worked with Nagy during much of her tenure as the museum's director.

“Ever a museum professional, Rebecca's love for art and for our campus museum is a big reason the Harn is one of the best museums in all of academia,” he said. “Even in her retirement, she and Paul are providing the care and investment to ensure the Harn can take the next step to continue enriching the lives of Gators, the Gainesville community and the citizens of the state of Florida.”

The Harn Museum of Art is currently engaged in robust fundraising efforts for the museum's expansion as a part UF's Go Greater campaign. Gifts will support the Harn's ability to impact the lives of all UF students and establish it as a cultural destination on UF's campus. Donors interested in supporting the project should contact the Harn Development Office at development@harn.ufl.edu to learn more.

The University of Florida, the state's flagship university, serves more than 56,000 students from throughout the United States and many other countries. It is currently ranked No. 5 on U.S. News and World Report's annual list of best public universities. The Harn Museum of Art integrates arts and culture into curricula throughout the university's system of colleges and centers. Its holdings include nearly 13,300 works in five main collecting areas: Asian art, African art, photography, modern art of the Americas and Europe and international contemporary art.

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