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Indianapolis Museum of Art Receives Nation's Highest Award for Community Service

Indianapolis, IN (October 6, 2009)—The Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA) has been named one of 10 recipients of the 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries. The annual award, made by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) since 1994, recognizes institutions for outstanding social, educational, environmental, or economic contributions to their communities. The Indianapolis Museum of Art will receive the National Medal at a ceremony held later in Washington, D.C., and a \$10,000 award in recognition of their extraordinary contributions.

U.S. Senator Richard G. Lugar (IN), who nominated IMA for the National Medal, said, "Congratulations to the Indianapolis Museum of Art on winning a 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The IMA provides the Indianapolis community with valuable arts programming, education, and many special exhibitions through the exploration of art, design, and the natural environment. It is truly a treasure in Indianapolis and very deserving of this prestigious honor."

U.S. Senator Evan Bayh (IN) said, "I congratulate the Indianapolis Museum of Art for this important recognition and for its service to Indiana and the country. The National Medal for Museum and Library Service is a fitting tribute to the museum. For more than 125 years, IMA has served not only as a center of culture in our state, but also a center of community where generations of Hoosiers can explore art, design and the natural environment."

U.S. Representative André Carson (IN-07) said, "The IMA has long-been a tremendous cultural amenity and economic asset to Indianapolis and the Central Indiana region—and it's time the nation took note of its significance. There's no question IMA is one of the finest institutions in America, deserving of all the accolades that have been bestowed on it throughout the years. And it doesn't get any better than this high honor. Congratulations to the IMA, its board and the entire Indianapolis arts community."

“The Board of Governors, staff and other supporters of the IMA are deeply honored to receive this prestigious award,” said Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. “Since 1883, the IMA has shared the best of the world’s creativity with the people of Indiana and our visitors from around the world. More than 125 years on, our mission has remained profoundly relevant to our community through multiple initiatives putting our mission into action.”

“Every day, the Indianapolis Museum of Art makes a real difference in their community,” said IMLS Director Anne-Imelda M. Radice. “Their exemplary programs respond to community challenges, positively impact people’s lives, and serve as models for the nation’s museums. I applaud their outstanding efforts and encourage others to follow in their footsteps.”

The Indianapolis Museum of Art offers visitors an inclusive view of creativity through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world’s continents. Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the IMA is among the 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States. As the largest and most comprehensive visual arts institution in the state of Indiana, the IMA reaches residents of all 92 Indiana counties. In 2007, the IMA made a noteworthy commitment to the community by instituting a free general admission policy, and annually, the IMA welcomes approximately 450,000 visitors to its Museum galleries, including 30,000 school children.

In addition to its commitment to offering free general admission, the IMA is a resource to schools and teachers. The IMA’s School & Teacher Programs Department works with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and other school districts through a number of programs, including its signature school program *Viewfinders*. Serving more than 9,000 students annually, *Viewfinders* is an art viewing program that utilizes Visual Thinking Strategies curriculum and includes every IPS third grader and all elementary students in the Metropolitan School District of Washington Township. Free family memberships are given to all *Viewfinders* participants. Other professional development programs for teachers draw local, regional and national participation.

With the goal of improving accessibility for Museum visitors, an IMA task force has implemented several programs throughout the institution. Some efforts include providing captioning on all IMA-produced video; making large print text available in Museum galleries, and providing assisted listening, accessible seating and signing interpretation in Tobias Theater, the IMA’s 600-seat venue for films, performances and lectures. Each year, universal public programs are planned in partnership with the Indiana School for the Deaf and the Indiana School for the Blind.

The IMA’s service to the community extends beyond visitors to the Museum building through online initiatives. In April 2009, the IMA launched ArtBabble.org, an online community created to showcase art-

based video content. The groundbreaking new site, which reaches audiences worldwide, allows visitors to explore works of art online as never before, through a collection of interviews with artists and curators, original documentaries and art installation videos. Incorporating cutting-edge technology, ArtBabble features high-definition video, full text transcription of all the videos on site and interactive features including viewer feedback and video sharing. More than 18 other institutions have already joined Artbabble.org.

The IMA is deeply committed to environmental sustainability efforts in the Indianapolis and Museum communities. The IMA became the first museum to be awarded with an ENERGY STAR award for energy efficiency, in recognition of its vast improvements in energy consumption. The Tobias Theater has several green design features, and the Visitors Pavilion in *100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park*, which opens in June 2010, will be a LEED-certified building.

In addition to the Indianapolis Museum of Art, other recipients of the 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Service are the:

- Braille Institute of America Library, Los Angeles, CA
- Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, PA
- Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, Cincinnati, OH
- Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin, IL
- Multnomah County Library, Portland, OR
- Museum of Science & Industry in Tampa, FL
- Pritzker Military Library, Chicago, IL
- Stark County District Library, Canton, OH
- Tennessee Aquarium, Chattanooga, TN

Any individual may nominate a museum and/or library in the United States and its territories for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. Members of the National Museum and Library Services Board, the Institute's presidentially-appointed policy advisory board, review the nominations and make recommendations to the Institute Director who selects the winners. To view nomination information, please go to www.ims.gov/medals. The deadline for 2010 nominations is February 16, 2010.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and

innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.ims.gov.

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