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IMA Director Maxwell L. Anderson Awarded Knighthood by French Government

Anderson was decorated as a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des arts et lettres in a ceremony in New York City on June 23

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, June 24, 2011—Dr. Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the Indianapolis Museum of Art, was decorated as a *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des arts et lettres* in a ceremony at the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in New York City on June 23. Anderson was granted this honor by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication in recognition of his contributions to cultural exchange between France and North America.

The presentation cited Dr. Anderson's many years of service to the French Republic in fostering cultural exchange and cooperation, including the organization of key loans and exhibitions from the Musée du Louvre, the Musée d'Orsay, and the Centre Pompidou. Anderson's accomplishments leading to the conferral of the rank of Chevalier include his initiation, as director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, of an historic three-way acquisition of the artist Bill Viola's large installation *Five Angels for the Millennium*, today jointly owned by the Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern, and the Whitney. Out of his conviction that new models of ownership were essential to collect and preserve the art of our time, Anderson approached Pompidou director Alfred Pacquement to join the Whitney in shared ownership. This was the first documented three-nation art purchase, which put in place a model for future cultural cooperation among France, the U.S. and Great Britain.

About the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres

The Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Order of Arts and Letters) is an Order of France, established on 2 May 1957 by the Minister of Culture, and confirmed as part of the Ordre national du Mérite by President Charles de Gaulle in 1963. Its purpose is the recognition of significant contributions to the arts, literature, or the propagation of these fields. The rank of Chevalier (knight) confers membership in the Order, and is only very selectively awarded to non-French nationals.

About Maxwell L. Anderson

Maxwell L. Anderson is The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the Indianapolis Museum of Art, a position he has held since May 2006.

From his school days in Toulouse and suburban Paris, and over a thirty-year career in museums, Dr. Anderson has sought to bring to light some of France's greatest artistic treasures from antiquity to the 20th century, foster scholarship, open channels of exchange, devise new models of ownership, and build better connections between the people of France and North America.

Since becoming a museum director in 1987, Anderson has pursued solutions to challenges facing art museums internationally. In 1988 he inaugurated a series of loan projects from the bulging storerooms of some of the world's leading museums in Paris, London, Rome, Mexico City, and elsewhere, looking for alternatives to buying antiquities from the illicit trade. He helped lead U.S. art museums to adopt 1970 as a bright line when considering acquisitions of archaeological material and ancient art. He pioneered complete transparency in museum deaccessioning practices by posting valuations of prospective sales prior to placing objects in the art market.

In 1990, at the age of 34, Anderson was awarded the rank of Commendatore dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana (Knight Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic), one of the highest honors presented by the President of the Italian Republic, in recognition of his efforts to stem the illicit trade in antiquities and to foster a better understanding of the value of ancient Roman cultural heritage.

About the Indianapolis Museum of Art

Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the Indianapolis Museum of Art is among the 10 oldest and 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and it features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The IMA offers visitors an expansive view of arts and culture through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Additionally, art, design, and nature are featured at 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park and Oldfields—Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate on the IMA grounds. Beyond the Indianapolis campus, in May 2011 the IMA opened to the public the recently acquired landmark Miller House and Garden in Columbus, Indiana. One of the country's most highly regarded examples of mid-century Modernist residences, the Miller House was designed by Eero Saarinen, with interiors by Alexander Girard, and landscape design by Dan Kiley.

Recognizing the IMA's positive impact on its community, the Museum was named a recipient of the 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Services — the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries. The IMA's commitment to free general admission, programming for schools and teachers, environmental leadership and online initiatives were among cited community contributions in the Museum's selection for the award.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Lilly House is open until 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.



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