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“Museum Expands Painting Collection with Major Gift from the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites”
A gift of historic master painters of Indiana supported by the Lilly Endowment

May 18, 2026 (Fort Wayne, IN) – The Fort Wayne Museum of Art was selected by the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites to receive 14 artworks as part of a broader stewardship initiative with the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and the IPS Foundation. Through the initiative, the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites received a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to purchase nearly 150 pieces of fine art from IPS’ historic collection. The artworks once hung in IPS schools that have since closed, and the project has brought the pieces out of permanent storage to preserve them and make them available to the public again in museums and cultural institutions across Indiana.

“This gift is a treasure trove of some of Indiana’s finest paintings. The original intent of sharing that work with schools throughout Indiana was noble and, years later, when that exhibition strategy no longer served the needs of schools, it was equally noble to share that work with museums throughout Indiana. This gift will ensure that the work is never forgotten and bolsters the public collections of Indiana’s best museums. In essence, the work is now in service to communities throughout the state,” said Charles Shepard, FWMoA President & CEO.

FWMoA received the following works:

- Robert Reid, “September”
- Clifton Wheeler, “Spring Morning”
- R. B. Gruelle, Title Unknown (Seascape)
- Randolph Coats, “Autumn Landscape”
- Jacob Cox, Title Unknown (Landscape with Cows)
- William Kaeser, “Circus Day”
- Thomas Barker, Title Unknown (Landscape)
- Elmer Taflinger, “All the World’s a Stage”
- Kenneth Reeve, “Yesterday’s Snow”
- Edmund Brucker, “The Old Mill”
- Paul Hadley, Title Unknown (Woman Sketching in a Boat)
- John Elwood Bundy, Title Unknown (Autumn Landscape)
- T.C. Steele, Title Unknown (Summer Landscape)
- Joe Duncan Gleason, Title Unknown (Sailing Ship)

This expansion of FWMoA's collection of Hoosier paintings directly supports our mission using American art to engage and educate our visitors. Many pieces from the IPS collection tie directly to our organizational heritage, which sprang from painting and sketching classes conducted in Fort Wayne by John Ottis Adams and William Forsyth. Adams and Forsyth trained many of the artists in the IPS collection.

General admission to the museum is free for FWMoA members, \$10 adults, \$8 for children 2-17, college students with valid ID, and seniors 65+. Children under 2 are free. Veterans, active military personnel, their spouse and children 17 and under, in the same household receive free admission. General admission is free the 2nd Thursday of the month. FWMoA gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10-6pm, Thursdays 10-8pm, and Sundays 12-5pm.

About the Fort Wayne Museum of Art:

Beginning with art classes in 1888 given by J. Ottis Adams and later William Forsyth, the Fort Wayne Museum of Art is now the third largest art museum in Indiana. Regularly exhibiting regional and nationally acclaimed artists, the FWMoA also boasts a collection of 10,000 objects of American and international art from the 18th century to today. The Museum is committed to the collection, preservation, presentation, and interpretation of American and related art to engage broad and diverse audiences throughout the community and region and add value to their lives. The Fort Wayne Museum of Art is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. This activity made possible, in part, with support from the Indiana Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. For more information, visit www.fwmoa.org.

About the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites:

The Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites is a museum system with 12 one-of-a-kind locations across the state that ignite wonder, inspire curiosity, reveal stories and create connections. The museum, located in White River State Park in downtown Indianapolis, serves as a central hub offering immersive experiences for visitors of every age and interest — from art and architecture, to history and culture, to science and nature. The historic sites stretch north to the shores of Sylvan Lake, south to the banks of the Ohio River and many places in between. Learn more at IndianaMuseum.org.

Image Credit:

- Edmund Brucker, "The Old Mill," watercolor, 22" x 30"
- Jacob Cox, Title Unknown (Landscape with Cows), oil on canvas, 30" x 48"
- Robert Reid, "September", oil on canvas, 40" x 40"
- Elmer Taflinger, "All the World's a Stage," 1946, oil on canvas on Masonite, 44" x 64"

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