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Hermitage Artist Retreat Raises More Than \$367,000 to Commemorate Retirement of Co-Founder Patricia Caswell

\$300,000 of the funds raised in Caswell's honor will establish an endowed fund to support the Hermitage's core artist residency program.

(June 30, 2021) The Hermitage Artist Retreat is pleased to announce that the organization has raised more than \$367,000 in honor of Hermitage co-founder Patricia Caswell, who recently retired from her longtime position as program director. \$300,000 of these funds – comprised of \$100,000 gifts from Steve and Dale Adler, son and daughter-in-law of Hermitage co-founder Syd Adler; Nelda Thompson, a longtime and early supporter of the Hermitage; and a third anonymous friend of the Hermitage – will establish an endowed fund in Caswell's honor to support the Hermitage's core artist residency program.

An additional \$67,000 has been raised to date in celebration of Caswell, with gifts from friends and supporters in our community, as well as Hermitage Fellows. Nearly \$10,000 has come from Hermitage artists, championed by a lead matching gift of \$5,000 from Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright and Hermitage Fellow Doug Wright. The funds raised from Hermitage artists will go toward the planting of a

citrus garden in Caswell's honor, to forever carry forward her tradition of bringing fruits and meals from her home to the artists since the earliest days of the Hermitage.

"Patricia's role in the founding and success of the Hermitage has been immeasurable," says Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg. "Thankfully for all of us — including the hundreds of artists who have experienced Hermitage fellowships and residencies — Patricia felt called to action with a dream of creating a place for artists unlike any other in our region."

At a recent Zoom celebration, dozens of Hermitage artists, dating back nearly two decades, gathered alongside Hermitage trustees to surprise Patricia and share messages of thanks and appreciation, as Sandberg shared the news of the funds raised in her honor. In a video tribute, nearly 100 Hermitage Fellows showed their love and gratitude in moving messages of appreciation for both Caswell and the Hermitage. "I want to thank Patricia Caswell for giving me some of the most remarkable writing weeks of my life at a beautiful place by the sea," said Doug Wright. "I am especially indebted to her for introducing me to my lasting and reliable muse, Toulouse the turtle."

"She dreamed of establishing the research and development wing of our vibrant arts and cultural scene — a home for artists and thinkers committed to creativity, preservation, and community," adds Sandberg. "Though Patricia is retiring as program director, she is forever a co-founder, and for that we are enormously grateful. Now, as we write the next chapter of this organization's history, we are committed to seeing the Hermitage grow and thrive for many generations to come — and we are continuing to dream big, just as Patricia did in founding this extraordinary and magical place."

“The Hermitage family presented me with continuous surprise celebrations, and this was better than any party!” added Patricia Caswell. “I was deeply moved as nearly one hundred Hermitage Fellows recalled subtle impressions and ‘eureka moments’ we had shared together. Observant and articulate as these artists are, they each made me cry remembering little things that meant so much to them, and acknowledging the magic of the Hermitage for encouraging and inspiring them toward more and better work. Andy and the Hermitage team devised a unique send-off that was intimate, lasting, and full of meaning. Knowing that this ingenuity will be guiding the Hermitage forward leaves me truly excited to see what’s next!”

Patricia Caswell co-founded the Hermitage with Syd Adler, officially establishing the Hermitage Artist Retreat as a non-profit arts and cultural organization in 2002. Until her recent retirement, Caswell also served as the organization’s program director, leading the Hermitage’s public arts and literary programming, as well as its artist residency program. She was involved in the creation and conception of an artist retreat program at the Hermitage, the negotiation of the original partnership with Sarasota County, the incorporation of the Hermitage as a non-profit entity, the restoration and renovation of its historic houses, and a number of its core programs and earliest fundraising initiatives. Caswell played a leading role in the establishment of many Hermitage traditions, including artist-flexible scheduling, free public programs for the community, sunset beach readings, and beloved beach dinners with artists and donors.

As the former executive director of the Sarasota County Arts Council, Caswell developed and led a grant program awarding \$15 million to Sarasota County arts organizations. A proud lobbyist on behalf of the arts, Caswell led advocacy campaigns

for arts funding and is responsible for the first county-wide strategic arts plan. She started Sarasota County's first public art ordinance and several other initiatives that broadened the scope of the arts in Sarasota. When arts in the schools were cut, Caswell mounted a campaign resulting in the first district in the U.S. to return arts to classrooms after being de-funded. She initiated the John Ringling Towers Grants for Individual Artists and Historic Preservation and started Sarasota's Arts Leadership Award.

Caswell's service on boards of directors includes the Florida Arts Council, the County Economic Development Corp., the Florida Association of Local Arts Agencies (President), Florida Cultural Alliance; Sarasota County League of Women Voters, SRQ Airport Advisory Board, Leaders Council of the USF, Non-Profit Resource Center Advisory Board, and a founding member of the Hermitage Board of Trustees.

Caswell has been a choral director, taught music in public and private schools, and performed leading roles in musical theater. She has a B.A. in music from Edinboro College and continued studies in music at FSU and USF. She is married to attorney Chris Caswell and has a son Ben and daughter Shanley.

To learn more about the Hermitage and its upcoming programs, or to support the Hermitage or to make a gift in Patricia's honor, please visit

HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

The Hermitage Artist Retreat

The Hermitage is a nonprofit artist retreat located in Manasota Key, Florida, inviting accomplished artists across multiple disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermitage artists are invited to interact with the local community, reaching thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors each year

with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage Fellows have included twelve Pulitzer Prize winners, Poets Laureate, MacArthur 'Genius' Fellows, and multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar winners and nominees. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theaters, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the \$30,000 Hermitage Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, the newly announced \$35,000 Hermitage Major Theater Award for an original theater commission, and the Aspen Music Festival's Hermitage Prize in Composition. For more information about the Hermitage, visit **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

The Hermitage is supported by:

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