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**Hyde Family Foundation Awards \$1 Million Challenge Grant to
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
*Announcement Made on Museum's 99th Birthday***

MEMPHIS, Tenn., May 26, 2015 – The Hyde Family Foundation has awarded the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art a \$1 Million Challenge Grant. This major investment, announced on the Memphis Brooks Museum's 99th birthday, celebrates the nearly 100-year legacy of this important institution and launches its next century. As one of the Brooks' leading supporters, the Hyde Family Foundation has made a major impact on positioning the museum as a leading cultural force in Memphis and beyond.

The \$1 Million Challenge Grant is offered in support of the implementation of a new strategic plan developed with renowned arts organization consultant Michael Kaiser in conjunction with the Brooks' new executive director, Dr. Emily Ballew Neff, its board of trustees and museum staff. This new plan concentrates on several strategies, which include developing a dynamic long-term exhibition program, animating the interior and exterior of the museum with exciting art installations, expanding education and community interactions, creating an institutional marketing campaign, expanding fundraising to support the Brooks' mission and strengthening the museum's board of trustees.

"We are honoring both the history and potential of Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, home to the finest, oldest and only collection of world art in the state of Tennessee and the Mid-South. We're embracing a new vision, new leadership and new energy as the museum approaches its centennial," says Barbara Hyde, president of the board of directors at Hyde Family Foundation.

Nathan Bicks, president of the board of trustees of the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, says, "We are immensely grateful to the Hyde Family Foundation for its longtime commitment to the success of this 99-year-old museum, and we look forward to celebrating our next 100 years."

The Memphis Brooks Museum of Art first opened its doors as the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery on May 26, 1916. Constructed at a cost of \$115,000 by architect James Gamble Rogers, the original Beaux Arts building was inspired by the Morgan Library in New York City. Funded by Bessie Vance Brooks in honor of her late husband, Samuel Hamilton Brooks, who died in 1912, the museum opened without a collection, staff or exhibition schedule. An acquisitions committee that consisted of established artists William Merritt Chase, Cecilia Beaux and Carl Gutherz, and donations by the likes of Samuel H. Kress seeded the Brooks' permanent collection, which now includes more than 9000 works dating from antiquity to present.

Today, the Brooks is a vibrant cultural complex located at the heart of Memphis' Overton Park with 29 galleries, two art classrooms, a print study room, research library, and an auditorium that's home to more than 100 film screenings each year. Included in the museum's permanent collection of more than 9,000 pieces are ancient works from Greece, Rome and the ancient Americas; Renaissance masterpieces from Italy; English portraiture; American painting and decorative arts; contemporary art; and a survey of African art. In addition, the museum includes The Brushmark Restaurant, Museum Store, and public and private meeting spaces. Dedicated to enriching the lives of its visitors through its collection, exhibitions, and programs, the museum serves more than 80,000 diverse visitors, including 20,000 school children, annually. The Memphis Brooks Museum of Art has planned a yearlong celebration to commemorate its centennial, beginning on May 26, 2016 and culminating on the museum's 101st birthday in 2017.

For more information about the Brooks and all other exhibitions and programs, call 901-544-6200 or visit www.brooksmuseum.org.

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