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### **Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Celebrates National Garden Month 2023 by Announcing a \$1 Million Garden Endowment Gift**

**Jacksonville, Fla. — April 20, 2023 —** The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens today announced it received a \$1 million endowment gift from an anonymous donor to support the stewardship of the Museum's historically significant riverfront gardens.

The Museum's unique mission to engage and inspire through the arts, gardens, and education is the bedrock of its operations. One of its aims is to elevate the gardens so that they, like art and education, receive the care, attention, and resources they require. This focus involved hiring Patrick MacRae as its first Doolittle Family Director of Horticulture and Gardens in March 2022, introducing its first horticultural exhibition, and making a concerted effort to increase its garden endowments from \$3 million to \$8 million by its 65th anniversary in 2026.

"As we reflect on our first 60 years and prepare to soar into our next chapter, we are grateful for this generous \$1 million gift, which is a testament to the Museum's growth, to our dynamic future, and to the Cummer Museum's sustained role as a vibrant cultural resource for Northeast Florida," said Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, Ph.D., George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director and CEO of the Museum. "This gift brings our garden endowments to \$4 million and supports our efforts to ensure that the gardens are a public learning resource for the community in perpetuity."

The Museum has received an increase in current use funds for the gardens, which support the Museum's efforts to develop the plant collections and manage the gardens following current best practices for botanical gardens. The forward momentum is formidable and further evidenced by the opening of *Flamboyance! A Topiary Menagerie*, its first horticulture exhibition, on April 1, 2023. This exhibition featuring 50 flamingos planted with flowering begonias that

were grown on site by the Museum's team of horticulturalists and volunteers, will be on view through June 25, 2023.

"This transformative endowment gift is key to the enhancement and revitalization of the Cummer Gardens," said Patrick MacRae. "As Jacksonville's top garden destination, we are honored to lead with environmentally responsible horticultural practices, to honor our heritage and the legacy of the Cummer family, and to serve as an indispensable resource for generations to come."

The Cummer Gardens are comprised of the English Garden, Italian Garden, and Olmsted Garden. The Cummer family's gardens were shaped by some of the leading masters of twentieth-century landscape design and architecture, including Ellen Biddle Shipman, Ossian Cole Simonds, Thomas Meehan and Sons, and the Olmsted Brothers' firm. The gardens were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010.

"As we intensify our focus on the Cummer Museum's timeless gardens, we are extremely grateful to the generous anonymous donor as well as other supporters who have made this renewal possible. These donors are the key to their success and sustainability," said Mari Kuraishi, the President of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and Chair of the Cummer Museum Board of Trustees.

The \$1 million garden endowment gift comes on the heels of an exceptionally successful year of fundraising for the Museum. In 2022 the Museum completed its year-long Million Dollar Match campaign within 118 days. In December 2022, the Museum received a \$1 million capacity-building and strategic planning grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through its Visionary Leaders category. This is the first time the Cummer Museum has received an award from this prestigious foundation, which is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities.

To learn more about how to support the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, or to become a member, visit [cummuseum.org](http://cummuseum.org).

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**About the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens:**

For more than 60 years, the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens has been committed to engaging and inspiring through the arts, gardens, and education. A permanent collection of more than 5,000 objects and historically significant gardens on a riverfront campus offers nearly 140,000 annual visitors a truly unique experience on the First Coast. Nationally recognized education programs serve adults and children of all abilities. The Museum is committed to ensuring that diversity and inclusion are woven into the fabric of its exhibitions, programs, and offerings. For further information, including hours, visit [www.cummuseum.org](http://www.cummuseum.org).