From the Director

On February 15, 2001, the Museum publicly launched its $55 million The 21st Century Campaign: Preserving the Past, Endowing the Future at a reception attended by University President Judith Rodin, members of both the University’s Board of Trustees and the Museum’s Board of Overseers, curators, staff, and numerous friends. The Museum announced the largest gift in its history—$16 million from Dr. Charles K. Williams II—as well as $9 million in other gifts, so with more than $25 million in hand, we will have to raise approximately $30 million more over the next 6 years. The following remarks are adapted from my speech (which was prepared with the assistance of Central Development) at the February 15th event.

There is real cause for celebration tonight, because we could not begin a major fundraising campaign were it not for our current strength. I was fortunate to inherit a strong institution from my predecessor, Bob Dyson, and over the past seven years our superb curators and staff have greatly extended and enhanced our previous achievements to make us the leading museum we are today. A museum, I firmly believe, which is poised for further greatness.

As you all know, our collections and research are among the very best in the world. But it is thrilling to know, as well, that more and more people are learning about them through traveling exhibitions and web-based outreach. With construction of the Mainwaring Wing, we are about to have up-to-date and long-needed facilities for the storage and study of our collections. And we have installed sophisticated new fire safety and security systems throughout our buildings.

But we cannot rest on our laurels. We have the vision and ambition to significantly strengthen the Museum even more. In order to realize this vision, we now must tackle three key challenges. First, there is the challenge—and the opportunity—to make our grand but aging Victorian-era building an even greater asset. Starting with our 1899 wing, we plan to make basic infrastructure improvements—refurbishing and air conditioning spaces—so that the Museum becomes a more comfortable and attractive destination. Second, we have the challenge to better support our cutting-edge international research, adding greatly to our shared knowledge and understanding of the world’s many cultures through time and space. And third, there is the challenge to disseminate information to wider and more diverse audiences, meeting important public education and outreach needs in dynamic new ways. All of these initiatives will make it possible for us to extend the reach of this remarkable museum, the collections it houses, and the knowledge generated by its scholars.

Jeremy A. Sabloff
The Williams Director

For further information about the Campaign, please call the Museum’s Development Office at 215-898-4026.