MEET OUR MEMBERS

Peter and Pamela Freyd

Dr. Peter and Pamela Freyd have been academics, educators, and supporters of cultural institutions in Philadelphia for more than 50 years.

Peter: When people ask me, “Are you retired?” I usually say: “Well, they’re not paying me.” That’s a bit different from retirement. I’ve been a professor for over 50 years and I’m still doing a lot in the field of mathematics.

Pamela: We’ve lived in Philadelphia since 1962, and over those years I’ve done a variety of things: attending graduate school at Penn, taking courses at the Museum, teaching in Philadelphia, and running a small non-profit foundation. I’ve also had the time of my life volunteering.

The Freyds’ introduction to the Museum was a happy accident through friends.

Peter: My first real introduction to the Museum was through Sam Kramer (former Curator, Babylonian Section) and his wife. The Kramers hosted a party at the Museum, and I crashed it. Their party was remarkable in many ways. I remember that the speaker after dinner was Egypt’s Director of Antiquities!

The Kramers and the Freyds became quite good friends, and so did the Freyds and the Penn Museum. Pamela and I started getting involved and became more active in the Museum about ten years ago.

Pamela: From my perspective, the Museum was like a department of the University. The Museum just never entered our thoughts as a place for donations. Peter and I have always had a great interest in tribal art. We visited Museum exhibitions and programs as a natural extension of that interest.

The Freyds recently donated a collection of Iranian garments to the Museum’s teaching collection.

Pamela: Back in the 1960s, the University of Pennsylvania had a relationship with Pahlavi University in Shiraz, Iran. We took advantage of a faculty exchange program and in 1968, we went to Iran with our two daughters.

While we were there, I fell in love with the bright, beautiful clothing worn by the Kashgais, the local nomadic pastoralists. These garments were such a contrast to the bland colors of the desert. When we returned to America, I wore the clothing I had purchased when I taught lessons on Iran, to open children’s eyes to that culture. These garments help us understand other people’s lives and cultures.

I thought of giving them to the Museum when I became aware of all the educational programs offered here. The dresses would be much more useful if children had an opportunity to see and learn about them.

As supporters of the Museum’s educational programs and members of the Loren Eiseley Society, the Freyds help the Museum make an impact.

Pamela: I love the Museum! It’s one of the highlights of my life—having it nearby, knowing it’s there, learning about the objects within. It’s a feeling of being among friends, and I’m delighted to know that we’ve been able to make a contribution.