

**Submitted by: David W. Ripple
Development and Alumni Affairs
President, Wayne State University Foundation**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JAMES PEARSON DUFFY ENDOWED FUND FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY
AND NAMING OF THE
“JAMES PEARSON DUFFY DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY”**

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors establish the James Pearson Duffy Endowed Fund for the Department of Art and Art History.

In consideration of this generous gift from Mr. Duffy, it is also recommended that the department be named the “James Pearson Duffy Department of Art and Art History.”

Background

In the late 1960s through the mid-1980s, young artists living along Cass Avenue—most of whom were students and faculty from Wayne State University—came together in a churning vortex of artistic innovation now recalled as the “Cass Corridor” movement. Their work captured the imagination of James Pearson Duffy who began immersing himself in their ideas and passions. He attended their exhibits, visited their studios and began purchasing their work. Unlike other collectors of his generation, however, Mr. Duffy viewed his ability to acquire art as more than a means of building a large collection.

In the gaps between the artists’ aspirations and their often perilous economic means, he saw a need to provide assistance in ways that validated their talent as well as improved their financial situation. Starting with the purchase of art from exhibits and studios, he soon began commissioning works for his home and later his business, Edward W. Duffy & Company, a Detroit pipe-fittings supply company founded by his uncle. Over time the commissions led to site-specific works that melded the urban aesthetic of Cass Corridor art with the gritty industrial fabric of the Duffy & Company warehouse. This collaboration of artists and patron resulted in the creation of a pioneering “alternative space” that attracted collectors, curators, art dealers, journalists, scholars and, of course, artists from throughout the United States and abroad.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

AGENDA

JANUARY 22, 2009

From the early 1970s to the early 1990s, Mr. Duffy graciously welcomed all who wished to see the art and would happily lead tours or set visitors free to wander the aisles of this most remarkable experience in contemporary art. In 1992 Mr. Duffy donated the Duffy & Company collection of over 100 works to Wayne State University.

Through the artists, Mr. Duffy gained a deeper appreciation for the ideals and contradictions of modernity, insights he expressed with a remarkable series of daily self-portrait photographs and images he took of Detroit's decaying street-fronts and industrial landscape—images that earned the admiration of artists and collectors alike. His profound and unswerving belief in the integrity and importance of the artists who did so much to change his life led him to begin donating funds to Wayne State University in the 1980s to enrich the education of students from very humble backgrounds.

For nearly two decades Mr. Duffy continued that support, initially for visiting artists, and then for foreign-travel grants—always with the conviction that young, emerging artists had an almost magical ability to convert even the most modest opportunities into transformative works of art.

James Pearson Duffy's particular affinity for the young, aspiring artists of the Detroit area who attend Wayne State has made his long association with the university mutually enriching. Because his many gifts of art and financial support have been based on his belief in the importance of artists and the power of artistic expression, it is especially fitting that this planned gift establishes the James Pearson Duffy Endowed Fund for the Department of Art and Art History.

This endowment will allow the Department of Art and Art History to engage national or international figures in the field of contemporary art. As the endowment grows and additional funds become available, it will support a faculty position in contemporary art, giving students the opportunity to study with an artist of the highest caliber. Such an endowed position will enhance the reputation of the department and university, help recruit talented faculty and students and further advance the position of contemporary art in the region and nation. Distributions from the endowment also will assist the department in sponsoring visiting artists and support their artistic pursuits.

Aside from salary support and stipends, the endowment will become a reliable resource to enhance the ancillary activities of the department, such as public lectures, and may be used to offset the costs of curatorial activity, exhibitions, studio expenses and student assistantships.

In recognition of this generous contribution, Wayne State University will name the Department of Art and Art History in honor of James Pearson Duffy in perpetuity.

Endowment Amount

\$4,213,000

(In addition, the estate has given in-kind gifts of art in the amount of \$312,575.)