

## DOCENT PROGRAM INFORMATION

### WHAT IS A DOCENT?

The word docent derives from the Latin verb *docere*, meaning “to teach” or “to lead.” Using inquiry-based discussion and dialogue, docents guide visitors of all ages and backgrounds in an active exploration of works of art from a variety of time periods and cultures.

### ARE THERE ANY REQUIREMENTS?

We do not require a background in art history or art studio. We do require the following:

*Ability to speak in public.* Docents must be able to speak clearly and articulately.

*A desire to learn.* Studying is a major component of the docent commitment. Active docents will lead tours of both the permanent collection and special exhibitions. Consequently, there is an extensive and continually changing body of material to master. Docents devote more hours to learning than they devote to guiding tours. Self-motivation and curiosity are therefore hallmarks of the successful docent.

*Flexibility.* Our diverse audience ranges from kindergarteners to senior citizens, and our collection ranges from ancient Egyptian sculpture to contemporary abstract paintings. Docents need to be able to vary their presentations accordingly. Docents must also be able to handle unexpected situations: larger or smaller groups than anticipated, last-minute changes in tour routes, and the sudden removal of works of art.

*Dependability.* Docents are expected to attend all required training sessions and be prompt for tour assignments. It is the docent’s responsibility to find a replacement docent for a tour he or she is unable to lead.

*Commitment to the program.* The time commitment involved in participation in the Docent Program, both during training and after, will be demanding. The experience is very rewarding, but it is necessary that you realize the extent of the commitment you are making.

*A balance of accuracy and creativity.* Giving accurate information is of primary importance, but your creative ideas will enliven and individualize your tours.

### ARE THERE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM?

All docents are required to be members of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art *and* pay yearly dues of \$15. We do not require that you purchase catalogues or books, but you may want to do so for certain exhibitions.

### WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

#### *Training*

Training for new and active docents is on-going each year, from 9:30am – 12:00 pm on most Mondays from September through mid-May. Because of the amount of training to be done in a relatively short time, trainees are allowed two excused absences during the training year. In addition to regularly

scheduled training sessions, homework assignments may be given, including reading material, writing reports and preparing tours.

### *Touring*

Trainees will begin giving tours in the spring of the first year. During this first year, there is no official tour requirement number, although it is safe to say that trainees should plan on at least one tour a week. Touring requirements for Active Docents will be established each year based on the size of the docent class and the estimated number of tours to be scheduled by schools.

### *Active Docent Status*

Once the training year is successfully completed, you will gain the status of active docent and will be expected to give the required amount of tours per year for at least two years beyond the training year. Active docents continue their on-going training on Mondays from September through mid-May. These sessions are usually required and always highly recommended.

### **WHAT DOES TRAINING FOR THE DOCENT PROGRAM INVOLVE?**

The first year of training is the most important as it provides the foundation for successful touring, introduces you to the Museum and establishes the basics of docenting. Training areas include lectures and gallery sessions on museum education, the elements of art, art history, in-depth study of the Museum's collections and special exhibitions, and touring techniques and development.