

For Immediate Release:

January 10, 2007

The Museum of Florida Art

The Stetson Mansion and DeLand Museum Partnership

The Stetson Mansion, the Florida winter retreat of John B. Stetson, creator of the famous western hat as well as namesake and great benefactor of Stetson University, was the inspiration for two investors from South Florida, J.T. Thompson and Michael Solari. It is they who undertook the risk of restoring the great mansion.

“We were inspired to learn about John B. Stetson, his integrity and innovation as a businessman, his contributions to the community and his vision for Stetson’s home. We wanted to bring it back to its former grandeur so that it will last for the next 100 years,” said Solari.

An urban historian, Solari received his degree from Tufts University in Medford, MA and has been fascinated with historic structures for years. He described the Stetson home as a truly unusual combination of Gothic, Tudor, Moorish and Polynesian influences. The building, which sits on more than 2 acres, was designed in 1886 by Philadelphia architect George T. Pearson. The home boasts over 10,000 sq ft. of living space including intricately inlaid parquet floors and stained glass windows with rare roundels.

Thompson and Solari have renovated numerous homes and other urban structures over the years. With this project, they want to create an adaptive restoration working with designers and manufacturers to showcase classic restoration products within this historic structure.

In considering the showcase, the Thompson/Solari team wanted to include the community in this worthwhile project. They contacted the DeLand Museum of Art and asked us to partner with them and we happily accepted. The project is now titled: *Stetson Mansion, School House and Gardens* and will become the site of the Museum’s annual *Arts in Autumn* event at the gala grand opening. Following the gala, there will be a month-long showcase for the public with programs, tours and lectures. The house will also showcase the work of Florida artists throughout.

The Stetson Mansion, School House and Gardens Showcase will provide a spectacular venue for manufacturer and designer participants to display their products while enabling the preservation of one of the nation's threatened historic treasures and simultaneously earning funds to benefit the youth programs of the Florida Museum of Art for the next generation of artists and architects.

Sponsors to date include: Tinker Graphics, Website Design; Intrinsic Hardwood Flooring, Inc.; Amarr Garage Doors; Jahluka Painting, Inc.; GAF Materials Corporation; Ecodomo, LLC; Florida Public Utilities; Alice Designs For You, LLC; Integrity Sales

and Marketing; Rinnai Instant Hot Water Heaters; Rinnai Tankless Water Heaters; Portable on Demand Storage; Marley Excavating Inc.; Atlantic Premium Shutters; American Tile & Stone Inc.; Velux, Skylights & Sun Tunnels; Hadco, Distributors of Viking Appliances; Electrolux Appliances; Street of Dreams Inc.; Premier Luxury Home Tours; Imperial Mailbox Systems; Savogran; Strypeeze Wood Products; Fine Design Custom Closets; Garage Siding; Kwikset Locks; McElroy Metal; Sunbelt Rentals; Collis Roofing; Copperhead Sinks; Sherwin-Williams; Zurn Plumbing; Pex Pipe; House Replumb; LG Electronics USA; Marti Schmidt, Custom Fabric Designer; Rainhandler; Gutter Alternatives; Gutter Free LLC; Parksite Builder Solutions; Fieldstone Cabinetry; Roseanne's Interior Design; ADS - Advanced Drainage Systems Inc.; Cambria; Quality Quartz Surfaces; Nordman Ornamental Nursery; PGT Windows; Custom Windows; Ruth Gary, Faux and Custom Painting; Piano Wholesalers; Discover Marble & Granite; Carolina Lanterns; Savagran and Cawkins Electric.

William C. Hall

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Museum Hours:

Tuesday - Saturday 10-4
Sunday 1-4
Closed Monday
Non-Member Admission \$3.00 Children under 12 Free
Sundays Free

Tours can be scheduled for groups of 10 or more. Youth tours are free.

The DeLand Museum of Art offers a venue where:

- creativity is fostered.
- appreciation of art is nurtured.
- all people are welcomed.

The mission of The DeLand Museum of Art is to integrate exhibitions and education to create an enriching and stimulating experience for a diverse audience. The DeLand Museum of Art offers a venue for emerging and established Florida artists to support the cultural legacy of our state.