“I BEQUEATH THE WHOLE OF MY PROPERTY FOR AN ESTABLISHMENT AT WASHINGTON FOR THE INCREASE AND DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE.”
—JAMES SMITHSON

WHY ENDOWMENT MATTERS

An endowment creates a permanent legacy and a steady stream of funds, on which the Smithsonian can rely in perpetuity. At the same time, it is an investment in people, places, programs and treasures at the forefront of inquiry. It forever shapes a powerful resource, the Smithsonian, which belongs to the American people and benefits the world.
A Gift for the Increase and Diffusion of Knowledge

James Smithson, an English scientist, made an endowment gift to the budding democracy in America, bequeathing his estate of $516,471. His vision created the Smithsonian in 1846 and paid for its first building on what is now the National Mall. Smithson could not have foreseen the breadth of discovery and scholarship, which arose from his bequest. Yet, he entrusted his legacy to a new nation and its future. Investors continue to follow in his footsteps.
The Smithsonian is one of the few institutions able to take on the large-scale challenges our world faces. Its long-term commitment to science and nature and all they can provide us is worthy of our strongest support.

—ROGER SANT

The Sants care deeply about saving the planet’s biodiversity. At the same time, they are strategic about their philanthropy. The two have endowed the directorship at the National Museum of Natural History. They know the Smithsonian, with its talented leaders and a vast network of resources, can reach and inspire people to create a sustainable future. The Sants also established the Sant Chair for Marine Science and funded the Sant Ocean Hall. The museum’s current goal is to create an endowment to keep the hall at the forefront of ocean science.

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The MacMillans have set up many Smithsonian endowments. One at the National Museum of American History endows the director’s position, which is named in Elizabeth MacMillan’s honor. Another at that museum supports the position of associate director for education and public engagement. At the National Museum of Natural History, the MacMillans established endowments for education and public engagement, as well as for the documentation and revitalization of endangered languages. Their gift to build the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s new education center also endows the center’s programs, ensuring they remain vibrant. Smithsonian-wide, many museums seek endowments, similar to those given by the MacMillans, to recognize talented leaders and scholars and create inspiring programs.

“The Smithsonian enhances education through innovative programs accessible to all students. We are honored to support these endeavors.”

—WHITNEY MACMILLAN

“Through the campaign, the Smithsonian will establish an endowment for the Sant Ocean Hall to maintain its leading edge in science.”

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EYTHE AND WHITNEY MACMILLAN

PHOTO HUGH TALMAN
Fleur Bresler is an arts patron and community leader in Washington, D.C. She and her late husband, Charles Bresler, donated a collection of artwork to the Smithsonian American Art Museum, where she is a commissioner and has worked as a docent for more than 15 years. Recognizing the importance of a strong curatorial department, Fleur Bresler endowed a craft and decorative arts curatorship through her family foundation. She also encourages her family’s involvement; their recent, generous gift to the Renwick Gallery renovation will be recognized by naming a gallery for the Bresler family. Through the Smithsonian Campaign, the museum aspires to endow its curatorial positions and education and public programming.

“The Renwick educates the public and fulfills artists’ desires to benefit generations of viewers. I believe it is important these inspiring projects continue.”
—FLEUR STRAUS BRESLER


Shirley Ann Jackson and Morris A. Washington are both physicists. Jackson also is president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the first woman and African American to chair the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. As scientists, they recognize the pursuit of discovery is not predictable or linear. They have created an endowment at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory to fund fellows-in-residence, determined by the director. Their gift honors the support they received at critical junctures in their own scientific careers. Through the campaign, the Smithsonian seeks to increase the number of endowed fellowships to attract scientists early in their careers.

“Knowing how the Smithsonian plans for the future, I see how vital an endowment is to strengthening the overall institution. That’s especially true in science. You need the flexibility to empower the brightest people.”
—SHIRLEY ANN JACKSON

The Smithsonian thrives on the generosity of philanthropists willing to invest in ideas. Our endowment is a stable bedrock of funding, which gives the Smithsonian the wherewithal to innovate, plan ahead and recruit the best leaders and thinkers, keeping us in the vanguard of scientific, cultural, historic and artistic inquiry. Endowment gifts made long ago still benefit our nation—and the world. Endowment gifts made today are the Smithsonian’s legacy to future scholars, educators and students.
As an entrepreneur and nuclear scientist, Peter Buck recognizes the importance of nurturing visionary leaders. He endowed a chair in human origins at the National Museum of Natural History. More recently, he endowed fellowships and internships at the museum to train scientists, collection managers, and educators. His endowment also supports Rick Potts, a paleoanthropologist. Potts has been gathering groundbreaking research about how human adaptation is tied to patterns of environmental instability. The museum’s goal now is to endow the directorship of education to develop innovative educational resources.

“My hope is that these gifts will guide the museum’s next century, providing a constant influx of new ideas as the museum pursues some of the most significant natural science research questions of our time.”
—Peter Buck

Bill and Melinda Gates
The Gates are known for supporting educational initiatives around the world. Their foundation established an endowment at the Smithsonian to fund multidisciplinary education projects. The Youth Access Endowment is shaping how the Smithsonian approaches education, reaching students and teachers in underserved regions. It has expanded existing programs and improved interactive websites, online conferences, distance learning, and games to reach new audiences in innovative ways. The Smithsonian’s current aspirations are to endow educational programs, centers, and positions for experts across the institution.

“The Smithsonian is a national treasure. We must support its place in American education, culture, and world history.”
—Bill Gates

Two visitors at the National Museum of American History enjoy using stereoscopes from a hands-on activity cart. PHOTO PETER OLSON
Transforming a National Treasure into a Catalyst for Change

The Smithsonian is embarking on its first-ever national fundraising campaign to support talented people, long-term research projects, programs and the treasures that make up our collection. Through the Smithsonian Campaign, we will raise funds for endowments across 19 museums, nine research centers and the National Zoo.
Barron Hilton has loved flying since he was a boy. His passion turned into a philanthropic priority. He has supported the National Air and Space Museum through his family’s foundation, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, for years. Recently, he established the Barron Hilton Endowed Fund to showcase pioneers of flight and their stories and create an early childhood education program at the museum in Washington, D.C. Now, the museum seeks an additional endowment to expand this successful education initiative to the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, so that other donors may pass down their passion for aviation to new generations.

“The adventure of flight inspired my father, Barron Hilton. Through this endowment, his passion for aviation will be passed down for generations.”

—STEVEN M. HILTON

CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

Andrew Beyer and Susan Vallon share an affection for contemporary art. Vallon has a lifelong interest in art and design; she operates an interior design business. Beyer was inspired to collect by one painting at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. He fell in love with the work of artist H.N. Han, met the artist and purchased one of his paintings. The couple’s bequest will establish an endowment at the Hirshhorn to support the acquisition of new art, as well as an array of cultural programs. The museum’s current goal is to create endowments to recruit leading art researchers and to support exhibitions like the one that inspired Beyer and Vallon.

“The Hirshhorn is filled with surprises. We are glad to give to future generations to enjoy its beauty.”

—SUSAN VALLON

ANDREW BEYER AND SUSAN VALLON

Doug Aitken’s outdoor, multimedia artwork, Song 1, at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

PHOTO © FREDERICK CHARLES
Virginia Boochever had a deep passion for history and the art of portraiture. A docent at the National Portrait Gallery for nearly two decades, she endowed the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition as a way to engage the nation in portraiture as “living history.” Every three years, artists working in all media are invited to submit works that expand portraiture’s traditional boundaries. The winner is awarded a prize and commissioned to create a portrait of a remarkable living American for the museum’s permanent collection. The National Portrait Gallery now seeks endowments to expand the scope, reach and impact of the Portrait Competition as well as commission and acquire other significant new works.

“She put her energies behind a national program to celebrate contemporary portraiture because she felt strongly about the need for the National Portrait Gallery to make history come alive through the stories of our people.”

—JOHN D. BOOCHEVER
COMMISSIONER EMERITUS
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

HOPE L. AND JOHN L. FURTH

Hope L. Furth is a teacher. Libraries are her love. She and her husband established the John L. and Hope L. Furth Endowment for the Smithsonian Libraries to enhance educational programs and professional training. The endowment helps the Libraries further its mission to support the research of Smithsonian scientists, curators and educators and make the collection accessible to the public. The Libraries’ current goal is to endow fellowships, which allow young scholars to research and share new knowledge and insight into our past.

“The Libraries represents many of the values most important to John and me: scholarship, education, dissemination of knowledge and collaboration.”

—HOPE L. FURTH

Investments in endowments will allow the Libraries to enhance its collections, which reflect the scholarly interests and disciplines of the institution’s research and curatorial community.
Our aspirations are bold. Through the Smithsonian Campaign, we will spark discovery, tell America's story, inspire lifelong learning and reach people everywhere. Your gift to the Smithsonian is a gift to the nation, the world and the future.
The Sommers have had a long history with the Smithsonian, establishing seven endowments and including the institution in their estate plans. Their endowment at the National Portrait Gallery, for example, has allowed the museum to develop thoughtful and innovative exhibitions such as *One Life: Amelia Earhart* and *One Life: Martin Luther King, Jr.* Their other endowments, at the National Museum of American History, the National Museum of Natural History and the National Air and Space Museum, support galleries, collections and traveling exhibitions. Visionary exhibitions across the Smithsonian depend on growing our endowments.

“Each museum at the Smithsonian is distinct. We hope our gifts delight future generations.”

—SIEW CHIN YONG SOMMER

**GUENTHER AND SIEWCHIN YONG SOMMER**

An avid diver, Michael E. Tennenbaum understands the importance of our ocean’s coastal ecosystems, which play an enormous role in sustaining life and human well-being. He, along with his wife Suzanne Tennenbaum, endowed the Tennenbaum Marine Observatory Network to undertake large-scale, scientific measurement of changes to these fragile zones and provide solid scientific data, which will advance our understanding of ocean health. The network’s director is equal parts scientist, visionary and entrepreneur. An endowment for this position will provide the prestige and financial stability to continue to attract outstanding leaders.

“The Smithsonian is best suited for creating a global marine observatory. This is a huge task; passion will be needed.”

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Alexander Graham Bell invested in the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in 1890. Bell’s seed money paved the way for a long list of investors willing to push the limits of scientific inquiry. An endowment established by philanthropist Thomas G. Hodgkins funded the launch of the world’s first liquid-propelled rocket by Robert H. Goddard in 1926. In contemporary times, Landon T. and Lavinia D. Clay created a fund to help upgrade twin Magellan telescopes and to support post-doctoral fellows as they focus on deep astrophysical questions. Through the campaign, the Smithsonian aspires to endow more fellowships to attract young talent worldwide.

“We know that science requires substantial financial resources. Clay fellows not only help define an important problem, they also have devised workable pathways to answer the deep questions posed by their research.”

—Landon T. Clay

Jim Simons likes complex problems. He has a doctorate in math and founded Renaissance Technologies, an investment firm. Understanding the breathtaking diversity and complexity of the tropics requires the collaboration of many minds. He and his wife, Marilyn Simons, invested in an endowment for fellowships at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute to help advance frontiers in research, build alliances and promote the next generation of tropical scholars. The institute’s current goal is to endow chairs for researchers to study primates, birds and sustainable forestry.

“We are delighted to support the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute’s important work to better understand diversity.”

—Jim Simons
What Stirs Your Imagination?

Create an endowment in an area you find most meaningful. We would be privileged to recognize your gift by naming an endowment in your honor.

LEADERSHIP

Do you believe strong leadership is essential to direct the strategy of an organization and ensure its impact? The Smithsonian seeks to endow 40 positions for directors, curators, and scientists. A $2.75 million gift will endow a curatorship at the Archives of American Art, while a gift of $3 million endows the directorship of education at the National Museum of Natural History. An investment of $5 million endows the directorship at the National Portrait Gallery.

RISING STARS

Perhaps you believe the boldest ideas come from younger generations. You could endow one or an entire cohort of graduate fellows or post-doctoral students. The campaign will create an additional 50 positions for rising stars. Post-doctoral positions require an endowment of $1 million, while $250,000 endows one graduate fellowship.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The Smithsonian’s commitment to education starts with early learning. To inspire future scientists, historians, and artists, we plan to endow educational programs. For example, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, aspires to endow outreach programs such as its National Design in the Classroom. The National Museum of Natural History seeks an endowment for the Q?rius Education Center. Gift opportunities range from $50,000 to $10 million.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Perhaps you have provided seed funding for a successful business venture. Now, make an angel investment at the Smithsonian that could transform the world. Create an endowment of $100,000 or more for new initiatives in any area of interest.

COLLECTIONS

The Smithsonian is entrusted with more than 138 million objects. If your passion is the unique contribution these collections make to the world, consider creating an endowment to support a current collection in perpetuity or to fund strategic acquisitions at the museum of your choice. Gift opportunities start at $50,000.