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Plains Art Museum Receives Gift of Photography from Scheel Family

Fargo, N.D. – Plains Art Museum has received a gift of 267 photographs to its permanent collection from the Scheel family of Fargo-Moorhead. The collection includes 167 photographs by Frederick Benedict Scheel, a serious and accomplished photographer who studied with Ansel Adams and other notable photographers and amassed one of the best collections of photography in the nation. The gift also includes 100 photographs by an impressive roster of artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries including Adams, Berenice Abbott, Brett Weston, Walker Evans, Ruth Bernhard, André Kertész, Barbara Crane and Mary Ellen Mark.

"Photography was dad's passion and obsession beyond the business of retail," said Frederick's son, Steve Scheel. "He studied tirelessly to learn to see what the great photographers saw and to capture what he saw on film. He enjoyed his days afield and in the classroom with Ansel Adams and Bret Weston enormously."

"Dad traveled the world to see the people, the great cities and small villages, and the wonders of nature that were so different from one continent to the next. He would set up his tripod and wait for hours for precisely the right moment to click the shutter, and then hurry to the dark room to print and critique his work. Dad's hope would be that others would not only appreciate his photography and his collection, but that a few might 'learn to see' and appreciate the details in the world around us."

"This incredibly generous gift from Fred Scheel and the Scheel family is truly significant," said Colleen Sheehy, museum director and CEO. "We will be able to teach our audiences so much about Fred's life and work as well as about photographic history. He is an inspiring community leader and artist. We also are honored to be in the company of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, where Fred also made a significant gift of his photography collection several years ago."

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Plans are underway to unveil the collection to the public in an exhibition opening September 17, 2010. A reception will be held at the Museum on September 23 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with a tribute to Fred Scheel by Museum Director Colleen Sheehy and Christian Peterson from the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

Frederick B. Scheel is the grandson of Frederick A. Scheel, founder of Fargo-based sporting goods and sportswear franchise SCHEELS.

Plains Art Museum is located at 704 First Avenue North. It is accredited by the American Association of Museums and is a nonprofit, regional fine arts museum with plans to significantly expand its programs through its "Little Artist in All of Us" campaign. The campaign is raising funds for the Center for Creativity and Lifelong Learning which includes the Fingerprints Interactive Education Gallery and working with Fargo Public Schools and other educational entities to build teaching studios. The campaign is also strengthening operations by enhancing the Museum's endowment and visitor services.

Museum programs are made possible, in part, by major funding from members of the Museum, The FUNd at Plains Art Museum, the cities of Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo through The Arts Partnership, The McKnight Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature, the North Dakota Council on the Arts through an appropriation by the North Dakota State Legislature and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. More information is available at 701.232.3821 or at www.plainsart.org.