

Biggs Museum of American Art

For Immediate Release
January 23, 2014
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FRANK E. SCHOONOVER GALLERY OF AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION NAMED AT BIGGS MUSEUM

Schoonover Fund Raises Over \$25,000 for Biggs Museum Naming Opportunity



Dover, DE (January 23, 2014) – The Biggs Museum of American Art, in partnership with the Schoonover Fund, is proud to announce the completion of a fund raising drive to name the new Frank E. Schoonover Gallery of American Illustration at the Biggs Museum.

The Schoonover Fund was established in 1999 to support research for the Frank E. Schoonover Catalogue Raisonné, published in 2009. Frank E. Schoonover (1877 - 1972) is recognized as one of America's foremost illustrators. The Biggs Museum possesses one of the largest public collections of the artist's works, as well as examples of other American illustrators. Realizing the importance of this collection, the Biggs Museum presented the Schoonover Fund with a unique opportunity to endow Schoonover's name with the Museum's permanent collection. The Fund Board agreed to pledge \$12,500 for a matching grant challenge, dollar for dollar, that generated over \$25,000, thus establishing the permanent Frank E. Schoonover Gallery of American Illustration. It will be located on the third floor of the recently renovated Museum. The gallery walls are painted cadmium red, a tribute to Schoonover's use of the color in many of his paintings.

"The Board of the Fund extends many thanks to those who have given to make this possible," says John Schoonover, Grandson of the illustrator who orchestrated the matching grant on behalf of the Schoonover Fund. "Visitors to the Biggs Museum and

Frank E. Schoonover Gallery of American Illustration will enjoy significant Schoonover works and memorabilia for years to come."

The Schoonover gallery changes on a regular basis, so revisits are encouraged.

Currently, the Biggs Museum of American Art houses over forty of Frank E.

Schoonover's iconic works, including such renowned paintings as *Morgan's Point was at His Throat*, 1935 (pictured above left), *Masked Indian Dancer*, 1935 (pictured on the wall, above center) and *Vidette in Pirogue*, 1911 (pictured above right).

High resolution photos of the gallery and Biggs Museum Schoonover works upon request.

Additional Background

Since its founding over twenty years ago, the Biggs Museum of American Art has been an advocate of Frank E. Schoonover's artistic legacy as well as a strong supporter of the Frank E. Schoonover Fund, Inc. publisher of the illustrator's Catalogue Raisonné. The museum's founder, Sewell C. Biggs, enthusiastically purchased 28 of the illustrator's finest paintings and drawings. Many additional artworks have been donated over the past ten years spanning Schoonover's student days at Drexel to landscapes following his career as an illustrator.

About Frank E. Schoonover

Frank Earle Schoonover was born on August 19th, 1877 in Oxford, NJ. A Philadelphia Inquirer advertisement for illustration classes steered him to Drexel Institute, where he was accepted into Howard Pyle's class for aspiring illustrators. By early 1900, the uniquely trained and confident young artist had moved to Wilmington, continuing his studies with Pyle at the mentor's studios on Franklin Street, launching his career with a commission of four illustrations in the book, A Jersey Boy in the Revolution.

Thus began a very successful and prolific artistic career spanning over sixty years, and encompassing approximately 2,200 illustrations for over 130 books and many of the popular magazines and periodicals of the day; *Saturday Evening Post*, *Harpers*, *Scribners*, *Outing*, *American Boy Magazine*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Colliers*, among others. In addition, he completed over three hundred landscapes of the Brandywine and Delaware river valleys primarily after the mid-1930's, by which time The Golden Age of American Illustration had essentially ended. After 1906, Schoonover's studio at 1616 N. Rodney Street was the epicenter of this artistic activity. His canvases were filled with dramatic images of trappers, Indians, cowboys, and pirates, breaker boys, coal miners, and women in the Pennsylvania Silk Mills. Writers including Jack London, Zane Grey, James Gilbert Parker, Henry Van Dyke, and George Marsh relished the Schoonover illustrations in their books.

As the 1930's closed, and having witnessed the twilight of his illustrative career, Schoonover dedicated his artistic efforts to the landscape of his youth, especially Pike County, where he spent so many summers at the family Bushkill house. He painted actively until the late sixties. By the time of his death in 1972, the Delaware Press had acknowledged him as "The Dean of Delaware Artists". Subsequently, his son, Cortlandt, authored two books celebrating his father's important contribution to the annals of American art and illustration; The Edge of the Wilderness, 1974, and Frank E. Schoonover, Illustrator, North American Frontier, 1976. For a full biography on Artist Frank E. Schoonover visit: <http://www.schoonoverfund.org/about-fes.html>

About the Museum

The Biggs Museum seeks to serve a diverse public as a regional museum of fine and decorative arts, made from 1700 to present, representing the State of Delaware and the surrounding Mid-Atlantic region. The Biggs Museum engages audiences through a compelling program of temporary exhibitions and programming. The Biggs Museum encourages the development of creativity and an appreciation for art by offering a comprehensive slate of educational programming for all ages. The Biggs Museum of American Art is a private, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization.

Hours of Operation: Tuesday through Saturday; 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Sunday; 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Admission: Biggs Museum is free to the public year-round. Fees may apply to certain programs and special events.

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