



The historic 1892 Freer House has proudly served as home to Merrill-Palmer faculty, administrative offices and meeting rooms since 1921.

Remembering a “Force of Nature”



Phebe Vandervort Goldstein (1930-2020)

together they helped to secure \$2.5 million for renovations and a preservation architect to insure it was done right.

Phebe loved the arts and architecture. Her children Carolyn and David spoke of trips with their mom to see special buildings she loved. “She had an eye for beauty,” Carolyn said. She wanted to celebrate and preserve the creativity of others and share those experiences.

A serious and committed board member to MPSI since 1996, Phebe advocated for a quality education for all children from preschool onward. She began her career as a kindergarten teacher, though she never went to kindergarten herself. “I went to preschool for three years and then right to first grade,” she said, attesting to the value of a quality preschool education.

As MPSI’s director, Dr. Lichtenberg had the pleasure of working with Phebe for a decade. “She was a force of nature,” he said. “Her intelligence, desire for progress, expectation of excellence and attention to detail could be intimidating. But she exuded such warmth, graciousness and charm that we felt extra special to be involved in her noble undertakings.”

Myriad tributes highlighted Phebe’s long life of meaning and purpose – she will be deeply missed. “The best advice I can offer is to keep smiling and remember to help other people,” she said at her recognition luncheon a few years ago. “Be good helpers in the world and the world will be better for it.”

The family has kindly requested that gifts in Phebe’s memory go to the Freer House.

Phebe Goldstein passed away peacefully on January 4, a few days after she and husband Sidney returned from an extended family holiday in New York. She co-founded the Friends of Freer House and was an avid champion and board member of the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute.

She first learned about the Institute from her mother, who spent a semester training at Merrill-Palmer in 1925, while a senior at Cornell University. Phebe also attended Cornell, spending a senior semester at Merrill-Palmer Institute in 1951.

“My favorite memory of momma was that she was always raising lots of money for important projects,” Phebe said in a 2016 interview. “She was helpful and friendly to everybody. I try to follow in those footsteps.”

The more than 150 relatives, friends, colleagues, volunteers and community activists who attended Phebe’s memorial at the Freer House, attested to Phebe’s legacy of generosity and tenacity. Freer House Director William Colburn recalled how in the 1990s, Phebe “saw how badly the Freer House, like many historic landmarks in Detroit, had deteriorated. She was moved to take action.” She teamed with Detroit historian Dr. Thomas W. Brunk and



L-R: Sarah Burger, DIA; Alicia McCullough, DIA; Barbara Heller, DIA; Doug Peters, Freer House member; Davin Brainard, DIA; Steve Shaw, DIA.

Whistler Painting Replica Installed

A full-scale *giclee* reproduction of artist James McNeill Whistler’s famous painting, *The Princess from the Land of Porcelain*, has been beautifully installed in its original location in the former Peacock Room. The original painting was purchased by Freer in 1903 and hangs today in the Peacock Room at the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian. The replica is made possible by a generous contribution from Freer House member Dr. David Weinberg, with in-kind support from Doug Peters and permission from the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian. The DIA generously provided the services of its expert art installation team, led by Davin Brainard, to properly secure the large work to the wall.

For more information and history of the Peacock Room, visit: www.peacockroom.wayne.edu



Phebe reviews technical renderings of original furnishings and house blueprints. Her keen eye and high standards helped drive the renovations that restored Freer House to its present stature.

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FREER
HOUSE
EVENT

*The below event has
been canceled.*

If you'd like to learn more about
the freer house, contact
William Colburn at:
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*Mad About Painting: Hokusai & Freer
Lecture, Reception, Tours & Exhibit*

SUNDAY, MAY 3

2:00 pm

lecture at the Detroit
Institute of Arts, Danto Lecture Hall

3:30-5:30 pm

Reception, tours & Hokusai exhibit
at the Freer House,
71 E. Ferry (one block north of the DIA)

Reception

\$5 for Freer House members
\$10 public
RSVP recommended

Mad About Painting: Hokusai and Freer

Frequently referred to as the best known Japanese artist outside of Japan, Hokusai was a favorite of Charles Lang Freer, who amassed the largest collection of Hokusai's paintings in the world.

The Freer House, in partnership with the DIA, will present an exciting program about the works of this iconic and internationally renowned artist. Dr. Frank Felten, assistant curator of Japanese art, Freer and Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian, will speak about Freer's collection of Hokusai paintings, now on exhibit at the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and how Hokusai came to symbolize the richness of Japanese art and culture across the globe.

"To think that Mr. Freer collected all of these works more than a century ago!" said Shinsuke J. Sugiyama, Japanese ambassador to the U.S.. "All these years later,



Katsushika Hokusai, Boy Viewing Mount Fuji, 1839, hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution: Gift of Charles Lang Freer.

I'm amazed at his foresight and his desire to understand a part of the world that was so different from his, and his deep appreciation of art that was non-Western."

Dr. Felten's lecture at the DIA will be followed by a reception at the Freer House featuring a one-time exhibit in the former Peacock Room of several rare and original Hokusai prints, on loan from a private collection.