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## Gift of Over 650 Works from Late Philanthropist Frederic A. Sharf Caps 18-Year Legacy of Wolfsonian Support

*Rare photographic albums, ephemera, and monographs strengthen the museum's holdings  
of material from the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Africa*

**MIAMI BEACH (January 16, 2018)** — The Wolfsonian–Florida International University today announced a significant gift of more than 650 items from Palm Beach philanthropist Jean S. Sharf and her late husband, collector and scholar Frederic A. Sharf. A longtime trustee and benefactor of museums across the U.S., Fred Sharf initiated the donation in early fall 2017, just a few months before his death in late November. His final gift to The Wolfsonian is the culmination of nearly two decades of institutional support and features rare, under-studied material from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the Second World War relating to aviation, national fairs, the rise of the modern Japanese empire, and colonialism in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

“Fred Sharf dedicated his life to ensuring that the items he collected were made available to the community,” said Francis Luca, Wolfsonian chief librarian. “He actively and prolifically published in order to share his knowledge, and sought out permanent homes for his finds in public museums and gallery spaces. We are honored that the Sharfs have chosen The Wolfsonian as a permanent repository for a large part of their private library, knowing that the extraordinary artifacts Fred amassed over a lifetime would ‘not collect dust on the shelves,’ but rather be preserved, displayed, and made accessible for generations to come.”

Significant highlights of the Sharfs' gift are:

- *Japan and Her Exhibits*, a rare catalog from the 1915 San Francisco Panama Pacific International Exposition containing over 400 pages of information, photographs, and advertisements on Japanese industries, art, and attractions;
- An original photograph album (1919–26) documenting a British traveler's seven-year trip around the world, with an elaborate mother-of-pearl inlay cover design of a bird with outstretched wings;
- A 5-ft framed tapestry (1927) commemorating Charles Lindbergh's historic transatlantic flight from New York to Paris, and his single-engine monoplane *Spirit of St. Louis*;
- Early aviation magazines, including issues of *The American Aviator* (1929) and *Flight* (1932);
- *Our Wonderful Women* by Cecil Hunt, a Second World War-era book published in London to commend women's contributions in the war effort as nurses, members of the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force), and ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service); and
- 1950s British fair publications, featuring colorful cover artwork and ads for products such as chocolate, shampoo, and diamond rings.

The Sharfs' relationship with The Wolfsonian dates back to 1999, when they began contributing toward exhibitions and publications. From 2001 to 2006 Fred Sharf served on the museum's advisory board, and in 2010 the couple's focus homed in on the collection and initiatives of The Wolfsonian–FIU Library, where they have underwritten an associate librarian position dedicated to accessioning, cataloging, and preparing their extensive donations for digitization and display. Rochelle T. Pienn, holding this role since its inception in 2011, has since processed thousands of items gifted by the Sharfs.

"A rare combination of historian, art collector, and humanist, Fred Sharf had a keen understanding of what was both beautiful and meaningful," said Pienn. "Whether donating period books from the Russo-Japanese War or original British colonial photograph albums, Fred understood the importance of relating artifacts of the past for the purpose of new scholarship. He was invigorated by the study and exhibition of these materials here on Miami Beach."

The Sharf Collection held by The Wolfsonian–FIU Library contains over 5,000 rare photograph albums and other unique materials providing first-person perspectives of historical events and places across the globe. Major periods and moments covered by the collection are: the building of the Panama Canal; British colonial initiatives in India and Burma; and wars and uprisings ranging from the Boxer Rebellion (1898–1901), Spanish-American War (1898), Second South African War (1899–1902), Philippine American War (1899–1902), and Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) to various Japanese military conflicts in Manchuria, China. Other materials also housed at The Wolfsonian include architectural drawings and illustrations.

"The Sharfs' latest gift is a keystone donation," said Wolfsonian director Tim Rodgers. "We're saddened that Fred's many years of fruitful collaborations with the Wolfsonian team have been cut short, but look forward to celebrating his legacy in the true spirit of the Sharfs—with endless curiosity, the heart of a scholar, and a passion for the overlooked and unsung."

The Wolfsonian is planning an installation of lacquered photograph albums from the Sharf Collection for 2019, and will continue to research and display material from the collection in other upcoming projects. Past installations that have heavily drawn on Sharf materials or were supported by the Sharfs include *Styled for the Road: The Art of Automobile Design, 1908–1948* (2009), *Visions of Victory: Picturing the Spanish-American War* (2012), *Wonders Never Cease:*

*The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Panama Canal* (2014), and *An Artist on the Eastern Front, Feliks Topolski, 1941* (2015), among many others.

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#### About The Wolfsonian–Florida International University

The Wolfsonian–FIU is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, historical, and technological changes that have transformed our world. The collection comprises approximately 180,000 objects dating from 1850 to 1950—the height of the Industrial Revolution through the aftermath of the Second World War—in a variety of media including furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. Admission is \$12 for adults; \$8 for seniors, students, and children ages 6–18; and free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, and children under 6. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 10am–6pm; Friday, 10am–9pm; Sunday, noon–6pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at [wolfsonian.org](http://wolfsonian.org) for further information.

The Wolfsonian receives generous and ongoing support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council.

#### About Florida International University

Florida International University is classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as R1: Doctoral Universities - Highest Research Activity and recognized as a Carnegie engaged university. It is a public research university with colleges and schools that offers 196 bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs in fields such as engineering, computer science, international relations, architecture, law and medicine. As one of South Florida's anchor institutions, FIU contributes almost \$9 billion each year to the local economy. FIU is Worlds Ahead in finding solutions to the most challenging problems of our time. FIU emphasizes research as a major component of its mission. FIU has awarded more than 220,000 degrees and enrolls more than 54,000 students in two campuses and three centers including FIU Downtown on Brickell, FIU@I-75, and the Miami Beach Urban Studios. FIU's Medina Aquarius Program houses the Aquarius Reef Base, a unique underwater research facility in the Florida Keys. FIU also supports artistic and cultural engagement through its three museums: Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, The Wolfsonian–FIU, and The Jewish Museum of Florida–FIU. FIU is a member of Conference USA and more than 400 student-athletes participating in 18 sports. For more information about FIU, visit [fiu.edu](http://fiu.edu).