

WHARTON ESHERICK STUDIO PRESERVATION FUND, *est. 2000*

The Wharton Esherick Studio in Paoli is a unique treasure that is beloved by artists and visitors from around the world. Wharton Esherick was a leading American sculptor of the early 20th century and is considered to be the most influential furniture designer of the century. Working mostly in wood, he extended his sculptural forms to furniture, furnishings, interior and buildings. His studio, also his home, which he built to his own design over the course of 40 years, is now an active museum which features his imaginative and tactile work.

For years, Wharton Esherick's daughter Ruth and her husband Mansfield (Bob) Bascom have served as the stewards of this very special property. They were instrumental in establishing a tax-exempt, non-profit organization to preserve and operate the site, a National Historic Landmark for Architecture, as a publicly supported historic house museum. To better assure the ongoing preservation and exhibition of the studio, the Bascoms have offered to bequeath the site to the Museum if it achieved, among other things, a professionally advised, independent endowment fund that would guarantee significant operating funds.

"We realized the Chester County Community Foundation could help us do that, and initiated the endowment fund," says Ruth. Adds Bob, "The distributions from the CCCF Fund are treated by the IRS as grants, not investment income, essential to maintaining the Museum's tax exempt status."

The initial goal for the endowment fund was close to \$2 million. Through aggressive fundraising, with the help of a \$1 million challenge grant from a donor outside Chester County, the Museum Board has a solid start toward ensuring the financial stability of the Wharton Esherick Studio. There is more to go, but they are well on their way towards securing the legacy and genius of Wharton Esherick.