



Chicago **History** Museum

Annual Report

2008–09

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Showstopper Made of pleated silk chiffon and twenty-five yards of nylon net, the "Butterfly" ball gown (1954) was a highlight of *Chic Chicago*. It was designed by Charles James for Mrs. William Randolph Hearst Jr.

Cover: A window onto Chic Chicago shows a sample of the contemporary gowns in the collection. Mrs. William T. Ylvisaker wore Mori's gown (foreground) to Gerald Ford's inaugural ball in 1974.

Chair's Message

This past year, my first as the Chair of the Board of Trustees, has been filled with great successes for the Society. It was my honor to take the reins during the year celebrating Abraham Lincoln's bicentennial. Among nationwide festivities, the Chicago History Museum stood out as an important center of activity with programs, three exhibitions, and the unveiling of the United States postal service's commemorative stamp set. It's been an exciting year, indeed.

In addition to all things Lincoln, we opened one of our most popular exhibitions, *Chic Chicago*. While it attracted many visitors, the project was also recognized by the American Association of Museum's Excellence in Exhibitions competition. The overall project—programming, catalogue, and exhibition—was made possible with the generous support of the Costume Council of the Chicago Historical Society, which also made it possible to launch the Museum's first design competition, FashionNext.

I'm also grateful to the Guild of the Chicago Historical Society for its generous four-year pledge to support the renovation of some of our non-gallery spaces, which is so important to enhancing the overall Museum experience for visitors. The public dining space, now called the North & Clark Café, debuted in February in conjunction with the launch of our Lincoln bicentennial programming and has been very popular. The Guild also hosted an event to celebrate a special opportunity during the bicentennial to see the Gettysburg Address, which was on loan for just one month from the Abraham Lincoln Museum in Springfield.

For this year's Making History Awards, we were thrilled to partner with the historic Palmer House as the event underwriter. There, we saluted the outstanding achievements of Norman R. Bobins, George N. Leighton, Donald S. Perkins, Carole and Gordon Segal, and the McDonald's Corporation.

While we present an impressive face to the public, we are also stronger behind the scenes with the addition of five new trustees: James L. Alexander, Patrick W. Dolan, Thomas M. Goldstein, Tobin E. Hopkins, and Daniel S. Jaffee. Eboo Patel and Robert Swegle have retired from the board, and we thank them both. We mourn the loss of four life trustees, Bowen Blair, Katherine Mayer, John T. McCutcheon Jr., and Dempsey J. Travis.

My gratitude to my fellow trustees for welcoming me into my new position as Chair and a tremendous thank you to our donors and members, staff, and volunteers who support the Museum every day.



Sharon Gist Gilliam



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President's Message

The Critical Path. This was our watchword during a year of assaults to the economy as we tried to move ahead with discipline and intelligence. Fortunately, timing was in our favor, with our 2006 renovation behind us and a new operating approach as the Chicago History Museum well under way.

Our winning formula of home-grown exhibitions and programs paid off. Led by *Chic Chicago* and the opening months of the Lincoln bicentennial, attendance was up 26 percent compared with a year ago. People have been drawn to Chicago's museums in general, reflecting not only terrific value for money in our own backyard, but also a hunger for education and meaning. Visitors bonded with us, as membership crossed 10,000 for the first time.

Thanks to staff and to our generous donors, we balanced the operating budget for the second year in a row. I cannot thank the staff enough for their cooperation and sacrifices as we made operating choices that are not visible to the public but challenge us behind the scenes.

In a distressed real estate market, we bought a 102,000-square-foot facility to consolidate our off-site storage, ending a quarter century of leased arrangements. A capital campaign seeks funds for this strategic investment, and we will recognize donors in the main museum building.

Our use of Web 2.0 technologies took off this year, with the popular staff blog leading the way, plus Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube. Our public programs are offered as podcasts through Chicago Amplified, a website hosted by WBEZ radio. The Museum and WTTW renewed an agreement allowing public television in Chicago to draw heavily on the Museum's collection to enrich its programs. National broadcasting also made frequent use of our collection and staff, including History Channel, PBS's *History Detectives*, and CSPAN Books.

The strategic planning process recently completed by our staff and trustees points the way ahead on our own critical path, in the following areas:

Collection

- Improve intellectual control and access
- Provide an optimal environment for preservation and access
- Share the collection with wider audiences

Audience

- Invest in regular audience research
- Identify target audiences and develop appropriate interpretive frameworks
- Draw on the power of the collection



Business Planning

- Expand membership based on meaningful and personal connections
- Invest in the staff as the catalyst for achieving our vision
- Develop collection-based revenue programs

Russell Lewis and I will be inspired forever by our staff colleague, Studs Terkel, who passed away last year at the age of ninety-six. What a privilege it was for us all to rub shoulders with our nation's leading practitioner of oral history.

Gary T. Johnson

True Originals: The Year in Pictures

Once again, programs and events were a huge draw to the Museum, bringing diverse audiences and new members. In conjunction with *Chic Chicago*, the Museum hosted its first ever fashion design competition, FashionNext, an event that was so popular, a second one is already under way. The bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birthday gave the Museum a great opportunity to mine its deep collection of Lincoln and Civil War materials for exhibitions as well as programs. Visitors were invited to hear scholars from around the country, including *Last Lincolns* author Charles Lachman and Doris Kearns Goodwin. Special lectures and performances were rounded out with original program series Chicago Treasures, Out at CHM, Project Sunday, History Pub Crawls, and sell-out tours. The Chicago History Museum proved that it is the place to experience Chicago's best stories.



After the FashionNext finale, visitors enjoyed a reception in the Chicago Room where all finalists' garments were on display. Two guests admire Melissa Serpico Kamhout's gown. Photograph by Randy Lee Belice.

After leaving the hit show *CSI*, Emmy-nominated actor and Evanston native Bill Petersen came home to Chicago to appear in two stage productions. He joined the Museum for the Chicago Treasures series and spoke to a capacity crowd in Rubloff Auditorium. Photograph by Charles Osgood.



The Museum's first FashionNext design competition began with five local designers and was narrowed down to three for the finale, emceed by curator Tim Long (standing), on April 17. Photograph by Randy Lee Belice.

Price Walton



Tommy Walton reacts to the good news as his firm's design is announced as the winner of FashionNext. The dress was put on display in *Chic Chicago* and is now part of the Museum's permanent collection.

A family explores a mural of the Gettysburg Address created for Lincoln Treasures.



Above: Partnering with the HistoryMakers, the Museum presented a panel of Chicago's fashion industry insiders Jermikko Shoshanna, Leigh Jones, and Barbara Samuels.

The Blues Cruise was a musical history lesson with the Shirley King Band. Photograph by Chris Losavio





To kick off the Lincoln bicentennial, the Museum launched a print campaign called "Everybody's Lincoln" and asked visitors to step inside a photo booth while we applied the signature beards and top hats.

A budding artist gets a hand at printmaking at the kick-off party for the Lincoln bicentennial.

Movies in the Park continues to be a big draw on warm summer nights. Uihlein Plaza fills up fast for the free series presented in partnership with the Chicago Park District.



Gary Johnson and U.S. Postal Service representative Todd Hawkins unveil the set of four commemorative stamps on Lincoln's birthday, the opening day of the Museum's bicentennial celebration.



The annual Fourth of July celebration commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of the Plan of Chicago, where members of the Burnham and Bennett families were keynote speakers to a crowd of nearly 1400 visitors big and small. Photograph by Emily Lynch.

A stylish pair at the preview party for *Chic Chicago*. Photograph by Randy Lee Belice.



Teddy Roosevelt and Abigail Adams welcome a group of students to the Museum on Presidents Day.

The popularity of the Graceland Cemetery tour, led by Al Walavich (pictured) led to the addition of Rosehill, Bohemian National, and Oak Woods cemeteries. This year, all twelve tours sold out.



Acquisition Highlights

Autograph letters from Robert Todd Lincoln, 1910–25.
Chicago History Museum Purchase

Material related to Elliot Asinof's research and writing about the 1919 World Series, 1963–88. Chicago History Museum Purchase

Archives of the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company, 1877–1956.
Gift of the Grace Kristiansen Trust

Ray Rayner jumpsuit, c. 1960. Gift of Ms. Va'Nessa Valentine Nixon

Double-breasted sweater jacket worn by Bill Veeck, 1976.
Gift of Mrs. Mary-Frances Veeck

Sophie afternoon dress, c. 1954, and a collection of Bes-Ben hats, 1950–70, worn by Mrs. Phyllis Willets.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Duke

Donna Karan evening gown worn by the donor, c. 2000.
Gift of Ms. Noren Ungaretti

Chanel evening gown worn by the donor, 1994.
Gift of Ms. Oprah Winfrey

Documents related to George White, African American Union army soldier during the Civil War, 1863–66. Gift of Marion Ksandr

Papers relating to John Bailey's work as Democratic National Committee chair, 1968. Gift of Dr. David Shneidman

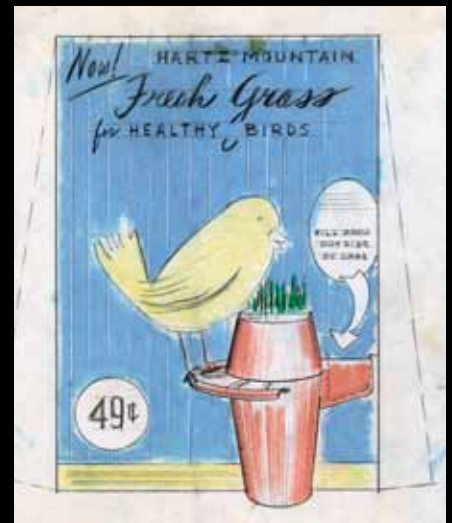
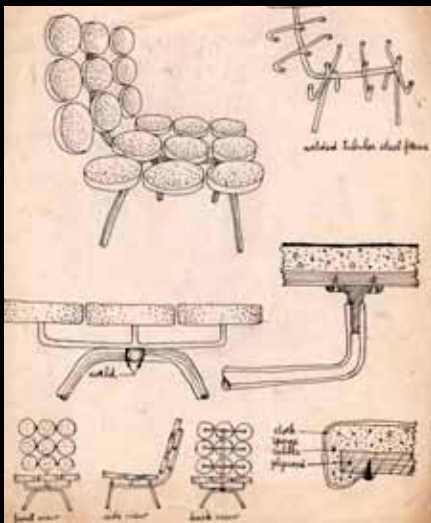
Materials related to the conception, construction, and fundraising for the Center on Halsted, 2004–05. Gift of Mr. Patrick Sheahan

Drawings and other materials documenting the career of Nathan Lerner 1930–60. Gift of Mrs. Kiyoko Lerner



Oprah Winfrey's silk crepe Chanel gown appeared in *Chic Chicago* and was a bookend to an exhibition featuring extraordinary Chicago women from 1861 to the present.

Nathan Lerner designed functional and inexpensive products from 1940 to 1970 that reflected the ethos of modernism practiced at the New Bauhaus. These illustrations reveal the broad range of his creativity found in this collection



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Fifteenth Annual Making History Awards

Underwritten by the Palmer house

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Accepted by James A. Skinner

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The Palmer House was the generous underwriter of this year's program. More than 350 guests came out to support the achievements of five outstanding Chicagoans and one corporation.



Above: Phillip W. Hummer.



Above Right: Award recipients James A. Skinner, George N. Leighton, Carole and Gordon Segal, and Donald S. Perkins.



Newt Minow (center) with Daryl and Michael Ebner.

EXHIBITIONS



Chic Chicago

September 27, 2008–July 27, 2009

Benjamin B. Green-Field Gallery
and The Mazza Foundation Gallery

The costume collection was center stage this year with *Chic Chicago*. Featuring a dazzling group of sixty couture items, including a newly acquired Chanel gown from Oprah Winfrey, the exhibition was touted by *Marie Claire*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Women's Wear Daily*, and *Vogue Patterns*. Over the course of ten months, the show brought in 175,000 visitors and attracted national recognition to one of the country's premier costume collections.



Burnham 2.0 A Composite Plan for the High-Speed Rail City

November 8, 2008–April 27, 2009

KPMG and Paul and Katherine Snyder
Community Gallery

The Museum partnered with the Chicago Architectural Club to present contemporary architects' responses to Daniel Burnham's hundred-year-old Plan of Chicago. *Chicago Tribune* columnist Blair Kamin called the show of 20 architects' plans and models "forward thinking."

How State Became Great

December 27, 2008–June 21, 2009

Macy's on State Street

A small but rich display of artifacts told the history of the nine blocks of State Street between Lake Street and Congress Parkway that emerged as Chicago's true center. City Council plans, photographs, and department-store archives revealed State Street's transformation from a muddy thoroughfare to an elegant shopping district.



Lincoln Treasures

February 12–August 17, 2009

Bessie Green-Field Warshawsky Gallery

To kick off the Lincoln bicentennial, the Museum brought together the very best from its renowned collection of Abraham Lincoln-related artifacts. For one month, we were privileged to show a handwritten copy of the Gettysburg Address, on loan from the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum in Springfield.

Bertha Honoré Palmer

May 23, 2009–January 4, 2010

Costume and Textile Gallery

For the 160th anniversary of Bertha Palmer's birth, the Museum presented an intimate show of her family photographs, souvenirs from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition made in her honor, and stunning jewelry, accessories, and clothing.

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Gifts of \$10,000 and above

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Two popular artifacts for adoption were a late nineteenth-century fire marshal helmet and puppet Fletcher Rabbit from the popular Chicago-based program *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*.

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The Costume Council enjoyed a preview of *Chic Chicago* before it opened to the public.

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 Mrs. Helmut Jahn
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 Ms. Barbara Levy Kipper
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The Museum's dining space, now the North & Clark Café, underwent a complete renovation with dark wood floors, a lounge area, décor inspired by the prairie landscape, and historical photographs of Chicago's food traditions.

North & Clark Café and Guild Room

The Guild of the Chicago Historical Society, has committed to fund the Museum's new café and the design and renovation of its adjacent meeting room. To be renamed in honor of the Guild in 2010, this important new gathering space will celebrate the accomplishments of Chicago women.

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Mrs. Peyton J. Barkley
Mrs. Stephen P. Bent
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Mr. and Mrs. Philip D. Block III
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Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln pose with Peggy Snorf and Cindy Kalnow at the Guild's preview of the Gettysburg Address.

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Treasurer's Report


The Chicago Historical Society ended fiscal year 2009 with a modest operating surplus and overall financial results that reflect the downturn in the financial markets. Like most institutions, the Society faced a significant decline in the value of its endowment, and mid-year budget cuts were necessary to reduce operating costs to match the anticipated decline in revenues.

In spite of the poor economy and significant budget constraints, the Society continued to progress in notable ways. Annual attendance grew to 283,540, an increase of 26 percent over fiscal year 2008. There was growth in membership to a record level of 10,174. In January 2009 we opened the North & Clark Café after entering into a partnership with Taste America to manage our events beverage program. This new arrangement will significantly improve the financial performance of our café and events operations as well as provide a more enjoyable experience for visitors. The Society made a significant investment to improve its collection and exhibitions storage management capabilities through the purchase of a building in Broadview, Illinois. The new facility provided us the capacity to move all materials which were previously housed at two rental facilities.

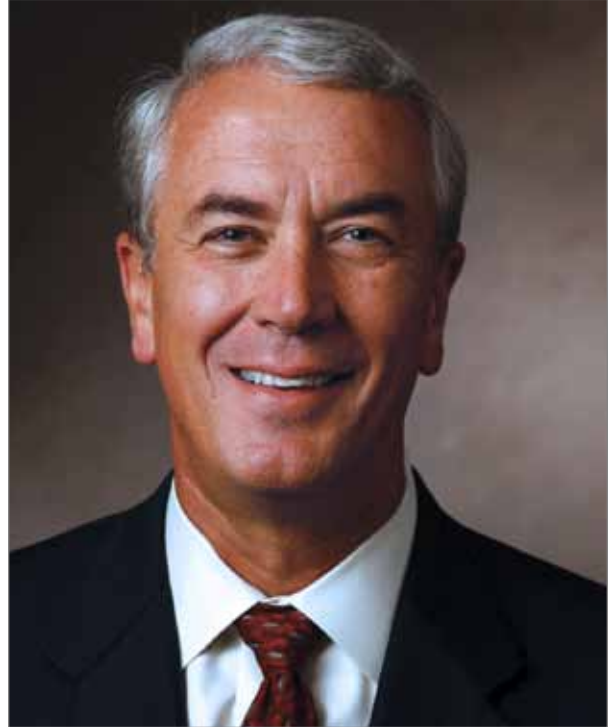
Net assets decreased by \$23,823,455, which was principally attributable to a negative total return of \$10,629,359 on the Museum's investments. This amount represents a negative 11.5 percent return for fiscal year 2009, a better result than the losses reported by many institutions in this challenging economic environment. There was a decrease of \$4,813,543 in the book value of an interest-rate swap agreement in place, which would only be realized if the Society terminated this long-term agreement.

In the year ahead, we will continue to make tough choices among competing priorities and curtail activities that are not critical to the objectives of the Museum. We also plan to actively pursue new initiatives to produce the additional revenue needed to sustain the operation of the Museum and continue to deliver high-quality exhibitions, programs, and services to the public.

The fiscal year results and financial position are presented in the following graphics. The financial statements have been audited by Grant Thornton LLP, independent certified public accountants, and their report contains no exceptions or qualifications as to financial position and results of operations. You may request a copy of the full audited report from the Finance and Accounting Office at the Chicago History Museum.

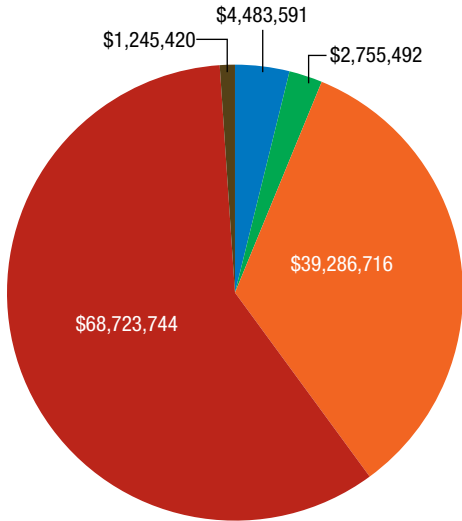


Paul L. Snyder



TOTAL ASSETS

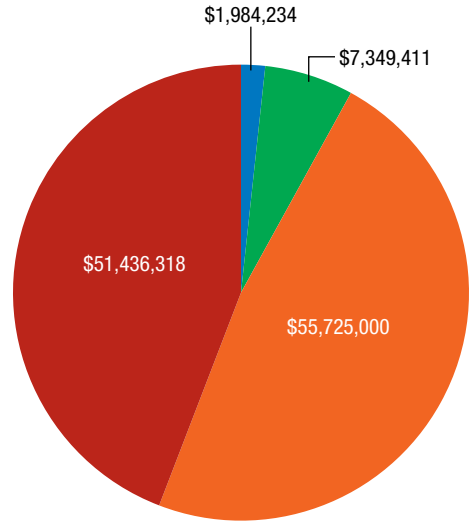
\$116,494,963



- Cash and cash equivalents
- Pledges receivable
- Land, buildings, and equipment
- Investments
- Other

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

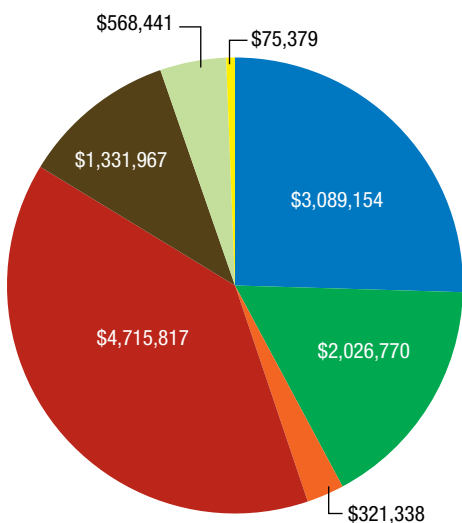
\$116,494,963



- Accounts payable and accrued expenses
- Interest rate swap liability
- Long-term debt
- Net assets

TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE

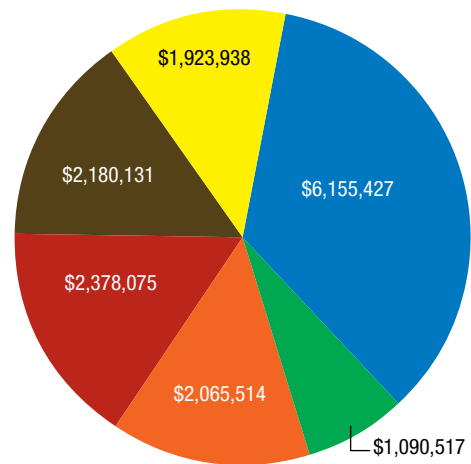
\$12,128,866



- Contributions
- Chicago Park District
- Government grants
- Investment income
- Membership dues and admissions
- Auxiliary services
- Other

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$15,793,602



- Collection, exhibitions, and programs
- Membership and development
- Administrative
- Building operations
- Depreciation
- Interest expense

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Years of Service

* More than 5
 ** More than 10
 *** More than 20



Top left: Sarah Koehn teaches a group of students with an activity station; **Top right:** Mike Boucek, Ed Geisenheimer, Don Brown, Bernard Turner, and Helen Brown at the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon; **Above left:** Marion Cohen, Peg Quinn, Marge Fahrenbach; **Above right:** Fredi Leaf prepares a garment for exhibition

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Marne Bariso, **Volunteer and Intern Coordinator**
Michael Glass, **Coat-Check Attendant**
Akane Henriquez, **Ticketing and Reservation Software Manager**
Kyle Kazmierczak, **Senior Receptionist**
Janis Owens, Maria Pedreguera, **Receptionists**
Noe Castro, Irene Delgado-Sadler, Mireya Rodriguez, Brandon Rowe,
Dorothy Ruggeri, **Visitor Services Assistants**

Business Management

Bobbie Carter, **Vice President, Administration and Human Resources**
Cheryl Obermeyer, **Vice President, Finance and Chief Financial Officer**

ADMINISTRATION

Human Resources

Mary Nora Mavrou, **Human Resources Manager**

Information Technology

Don Pasqualini, **Director**

Properties

Lawrence E. Schmitt, **Director**
John R. Vlna, **Chief of Security**
Bill Bostic, Marcia Gundrum, **Security Lieutenants**
Marcelo Franco, Valerie Wells, **Security Sergeants**
Jerald Bolden, Jimmie Davis, Reginald Coleman, Melissa Garcia,
Barbara J. Hawkins, Salvador Hernandez, Thomas Holt,
Linda Hubbs, **Security Officers**
Antonio Navas, **Building Engineer**
Ben Minnis, **Audio-Visual Technician**
Julio Garcia, John Graaman, Kathy Stringfellow, Robert Upshaw,
Walter Washington, **Housekeepers**
Patrick Thomas, **Harvard Custodian**
Leonard Tornabene, **Shipping/Receiving Clerk**

FINANCE

Accounting

Leigh Stevenson, **Director**
Cynthia Mendez, **Accounting Coordinator**
Anna Rossi, **Associate Accountant**

Corporate Events

Barbara Siska, **Director**
Becky Cowden, **Corporate Events Manager**
Stephanie Slovak, **Events Coordinator**

Museum Store

Elizabeth F. Hubbart, **Director of Merchandising**
Jennifer C. Vlna, **Store Buyer/Inventory Manager**
Beth A. Brettell, Nicole A. Johnson, Natasha Rodriguez, **Sales Associates**

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Anna Carey, **Assistant Manager, Annual Fund and Membership**
Maria G. Castaneda, **Gift Processor**
Meaghan Spellman, **Annual Fund and Grants Manager**
Melanie Wang, **Coordinator, Annual Fund and Membership**

MARKETING AND SPONSORSHIP

Melissa Hayes, **Director**
Lauren Dolan, **Public Relations and Sponsorship Manager**
Audrey Womack, **Adult Group Tour Manager**

This list reflects staff as of June 30, 2009.

Annual Report Editor: Amanda B. Stenlund
Annual Report Design: Nancy Sheeber

To report an error in the annual report, please contact the
Institutional Advancement Department at 312.799.2118.