

BACKS AGAINST THE WALL


Bears facing elimination after falling in 10 innings in MVC Tournament.

Sports, 1D

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Hamra makes a big impact

Springfield businessman helps facilitate six-figure art donation

By Sarah Okeson
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Springfield businessman Sam Hamra helped bring about the donation of 60 paintings valued at \$710,200 to the Springfield Art Museum and colleges and universities, including four in Springfield.

Hamra announced the donations Tuesday at a press conference attended by Springfield Mayor Bob Stephens and other area dignitaries.

"I am hopeful that you will enjoy seeing the paintings which will enhance Springfield, Missouri," Hamra said.

The donated paintings include works such as Squirrel, a watercolor valued at \$5,000 by Don Nice, a Yale-educated artist whose paintings are also at the National Academy Museum in New York and the University of Oklahoma.

The most expensive painting is Muriel's Grand Pavanne, valued at \$35,000, a painting of a dancing nun done in egg tempera by artist Robert Vickrey, who lived in Naples, Fla.

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SPRINGFIELD RECIPIENTS

Drury University, six paintings valued at \$42,900

Evangel University, five paintings valued at \$59,000

Missouri State University, seven paintings valued at \$91,000

Ozarks Technical Community College, four paintings valued at \$40,200

Springfield Art Museum, 14 paintings valued at \$176,000



Springfield Art Museum Director Nick Nelson, right, shakes hands with Sam Hamra at a press conference on Tuesday. Hamra donated 14 paintings to the Springfield Art Museum and several to Springfield colleges. VALERIE MOSLEY/NEWS-LEADER

Hamra

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Hamra predicted that the paintings will be worth more in the years to come.

"The value of these paintings will increase dramatically over the

years," he said.

Hamra, who has a home in Naples, Fla., worked with Bill Meek of the Harmon-Meek Gallery in Naples on the donations. Hamra said the paintings previously belonged to the artists or their estates.

"I did it with their consent," Hamra said.

Hamra, an attorney, founded Hamra Enterprises, which owns and operates 83 restaurants and has real estate properties in Missouri, Texas, Illinois and Massachusetts.

Stephens thanked Hamra and his wife, June, for the donations.

"I want to thank you for

bringing a little bit more art education to the city of Springfield," Stephens said.

Thirty-six paintings will go to the Springfield area. Drury University will get six paintings, Evangel University, five; Missouri State University, seven, Ozarks Technical

Community College, four; and the Springfield Art Museum, 14.

The University of Missouri will receive seven paintings valued at \$111,500. Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., will receive 10 paintings valued at \$97,100, and Ohio Wesleyan University

will receive seven paintings valued at \$92,500.

Hamra stressed that he is not benefiting financially from the donations or receiving a tax break.

"These are bona fide gifts," he said. "Absolutely no financial gain. We're doing this out of the goodness of our heart."