

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION AWARDS \$1.2 MILLION TO IMPROVE THE PRESERVATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS IN HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

ATLANTA – (July 18, 2007) – The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded a grant for \$1.2 million to the Art Conservation Department at the University of Delaware and the Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET), in partnership with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Library Alliance and the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA).

The grant is to fund a 30-month, four-phase initiative to improve the preservation of significant photographic collections held within Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). "These collections document the visual and institutional history and legacy of HBCUs and form a core of primary research material for the study of African American history," said Kate Nevins, Executive Director, SOLINET.

A recent survey of the HBCU libraries revealed that only 22 percent had completed a conservation assessment of their photographic holdings, which is a necessary step in determining the short and long-term needs of a collection. "This grant will immediately empower the stewards of these important collections by providing practical training in photograph preservation, assisting with prioritization of needed projects, stabilizing at-risk collections, and encouraging investment in preservation capacity-building within their institutions," said Debra Hess Norris, Chair of the Art Conservation Department at the University of Delaware.

The project includes an educational summit on photograph preservation, on-site collection assessments, and funding for projects and environmental monitoring at ten HBCUs. Longer-term, the project will promote opportunities for sharing resources and conservation knowledge within the broader HBCU network, and introduce HBCU undergraduates to graduate studies and careers in conservation and preservation as well as other professional opportunities within libraries, archives and museums.

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SOLINET

Founded in 1973, SOLINET is a not-for-profit membership organization serving more than 2,700 libraries of all types and sizes in ten Southeastern states and the Caribbean. Primary programs are Member Outreach, OCLC Services, Preservation & Access, Electronic Resources, Library Products, Digital Services, Educational Services, and Consulting. Visit the SOLINET website at www.solinet.net

The Art Conservation Department at the University of Delaware

The Art Conservation Department at the University of Delaware administers both undergraduate and graduate programs. The department's faculty includes leading

scientists and conservators in the treatment and preservation of paintings, works of art on paper, photographic materials, furniture, textiles, decorative, archeological and ethnographic objects, and architectural surfaces. Visit the University of Delaware website at www.artcon.udel.edu

The Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts

The Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts has grown to be one of the largest regional conservation laboratories in the country. Its wide array of services, sophisticated treatment facilities, innovative approaches, and highly trained and experienced staff have earned it a prominent and respected place in the conservation field. A nonprofit organization, CCAHA's organizational structure includes a board of directors comprised of representatives of cultural institutions and leaders in business and in the community; an executive director; and an expertly trained staff. Visit the CCAHA website at www.ccaha.org

HBCU Library Alliance

HBCU libraries serve as unique and indispensable gatekeepers of history, culture and the African-American experience. Created by the deans and directors of these libraries in 2002, the HBCU Library Alliance seeks to ensure excellence in HBCU libraries through the development, coordination and promotion of programs and activities to enhance members' collections and services. Visit the HBCU Library Alliance website at www.hbculibraries.org

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is a private foundation that makes grants on a selective basis in the areas of higher education, museums and art conservation, performing arts, and conservation and the environment. Information about the Foundation, including its annual reports, is available on its website, <http://www.mellon.org>.