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**On the legacy of Carol S. Gikas, outgoing President and Executive Director
of the Louisiana Art & Science Museum**

BATON ROUGE, LA – For most of her career Carol S. Gikas has been devoted to the Louisiana Art & Science Museum, from which she has made a lasting impact on Baton Rouge and the statewide museum community. She is due to retire by the end of the January, when Serena Pandos will succeed her.

Gikas' previous museum positions were at the Arkansas Arts Center and the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas in Austin, where she earned a Masters degree in art history and museum studies. She is a graduate of the Museum Management Institute (University of California, Berkeley), and three executive education programs at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Gikas arrived in Baton Rouge in 1980, taking the helm of what was then the Louisiana Art & Science Center, she became the Museum's second director, succeeding Adalié Brent. She has served in this capacity for nearly four decades. During this time, the Museum has experienced significant growth in program development, facilities, attendance, membership, fundraising, and community support.

Her most visible influences are seen in the Museum's collection growth and program development. In 1983, the Museum opened Discovery Depot, a hands-on children's gallery, followed by the Ancient Egypt Gallery in 1986 and Science Station in 1991. These three galleries continue to be favorites for the Museum's youngest visitors. The Challenger Learning Center, comprised of a simulated space station and mission control, opened in 1994 and remained in operation until 2007.

In 1998, Gikas began raising funds for an endowment and to build a planetarium and atrium. Private fundraising, along with a cooperative agreement between the City and the State, raised more than \$17 million to build a 25,000 square foot addition to include the state-of-the-art Irene W. Pennington Planetarium, the Bert S. Turner Family Atrium, classrooms, and two exhibition spaces. When the planetarium opened in 2003, it was the largest and most technologically advanced in the region. For the first year of expansion, the Museum's operating budget doubled to \$2.5 million and yearly attendance quintupled from roughly 55,000 to 245,000. Eight years later, that same planetarium would host the 2012 International Planetarium Society Conference with more than eight-hundred delegates from forty-four countries across six continents.

Among the many exhibitions of note hosted by the Museum was *Josephine, La Grande Amour de Napoleon*, which took place in 2003 during the Louisiana Bicentennial Celebration. Gikas, on behalf of the Museum, joined a collaborative effort with the Baton Rouge Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism to bring to Baton Rouge art and artifacts from Malmasion, Josephine Bonaparte's historic residence outside of Paris. This exhibition was visited by more than 33,000 people. Other special shows include *Treasures of Provence from Le Musée Granet*, *Dinosaurs of Jurassic Park*, and an installment by international sound artist and composer Christopher Janney.

During this time, the Museum has grown to fulfill the needs of its community. Last year, 172,000 people visited the Art & Science Museum; of these, over 98,000 were schoolchildren. During Carol's tenure, LASM achieved re-accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums four consecutive times.

Gikas is also a founding member of the Louisiana Association of Museums (LAM), as well as its former president. In fact, LAM's offices were housed with LASM during some of its formative years. Gikas has also been professionally involved with the Southeast Museums Conference and the Art Museum Association of America, and was a vice-chair of the national conference of the American Alliance of Museums when it convened in New Orleans. Among her awards, she was in the first class to be awarded the John W. Barton Jr. Excellence in Nonprofit Management Award from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation; she received the Mayor-President's Award for Excellence in the Arts; and she received the Marketer of the Year Award from the Sales and Marketing Executives of Greater Baton Rouge. She was recently recognized by her colleagues around the state in LAM with the Louisiana Museum Professional Career Award.

Commenting on the organization's future, Gikas states, "I am very pleased with the selection of Serena Pandos for the new director. Her professional background and experience is a perfect match for our organization and mission. As only the third director in almost 60 years, she will become part of the stability in leadership that LASM has long enjoyed."

Gikas plans to spend retirement pursuing new avenues for learning and visiting museums.

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About Louisiana Art & Science Museum

A nonprofit organization housed in a historic train station on the banks of the Mississippi River in downtown Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum enhances the understanding and appreciation of art and science for general audiences and students by presenting unique, educational and entertaining experiences that encourage discovery, inspire creativity, and foster the pursuit of knowledge. Enjoy our full dome planetarium, fine art, family-friendly galleries, and more. Details available at lasm.org.