

Media Contact:

Carla Murray, Director of Marketing & Communications

804-358-7166, ext. 315

cmurray@maymont.org

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAYMONT MANSION CENTERPIECE OF MAYMONT ESTATE TO BE CELEBRATED WITH COSTUME EVENT, PRIZED TAPESTRY CONSERVATION & 125 OBJECTS FEATURED ONLINE

The final stages of construction for the mansion at Maymont, including installation of a massive Tiffany window, were chronicled in the local news and surely were the talk of the town in Richmond, Virginia leading up to its completion in 1893. It was the grandest Richmond residence of its time, and today, it stands at the heart of Maymont, the beloved attraction that was recently named Virginia's best park by Money magazine (May 25, 2018). The Richardson Romanesque-style home – featuring a stone façade, turrets, and a wraparound porch with pink granite columns – was designed by architect Edgerton Rogers for New South financier and philanthropist, James H. Dooley, and his wife, Sallie. It was built on a 100-acre property that the Dooleys purchased in 1886, and it includes 13,000 square-feet of living space, 33 rooms with sumptuous architectural details, an elevator and other modern conveniences of the day. The Maymont Mansion also was among the earliest residences in the Richmond area to be wired for electricity. During the three decades that the Dooleys lived in the mansion, they devoted their wealth and energies to the development of the surrounding landscape with elaborate gardens, an arboretum, picturesque parkland, and a carriage house and other substantial estate outbuildings. Now, Maymont is historically significant as an unusually intact example of the ornamental estates of the Gilded Age. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the most visited historic attraction in the Richmond region.

“Over the past four decades our aims have been to raise awareness and understanding of Maymont’s significance as an amazingly intact estate of the Gilded Age, to guide the incremental, long-term restoration of the mansion and conservation of its extraordinary collection, and to bring life, detail and accuracy to its presentation for the public,” said Dale Wheary, Maymont Curator and Director of Historical Collections. “Thanks to private and federal grants and Maymont Council donors, we see today the rewards of this endeavor. The original grandeur of the upstairs interiors has returned, the service areas have been restored to tell the story of the mansion as a domestic workplace, and thousands of visitors give the house museum highest marks for its authenticity and the quality of its docent-led tours. Altogether Maymont offers a comprehensive representation of the Gilded Age comparable to no other historic attraction in Virginia.”

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To commemorate the Maymont Mansion's 125th anniversary, a public celebration will be held on Sunday, September 23 from 12 to 5pm during the annual Time Travelers weekend when many Richmond region historic house museums offer free tours and special activities. Guests to Maymont that day can meet Victorian-costumed ladies and gentlemen and enjoy carriage rides, food and music of the Dooley era. Attendees are encouraged to wear their favorite period hat and other attire, share Maymont memories with docents and historians on-site, and delight in the picturesque views outside and the splendid sights inside the fully furnished house museum.

"The Maymont Mansion and its artfully designed gardens and grounds, are among the greatest gifts this community has ever received," said Parke Richeson, Maymont Executive Director. "With its meticulous restoration thanks to long-time Curator, Dale Wheary, as well as teams of experts and support from generous donors, the Mansion stands as a shining jewel in the center of this wonderful city. Maymont's 100 acres bring delight to everyone - locals and tourists alike - with memorable, enriching experiences, and we're excited to celebrate this milestone birthday of the Mansion with a day of Gilded Age festivities in the fall."

Also during this anniversary year, one of Maymont Mansion's great treasures will return to its home after a two-year conservation project by the St. John the Divine Textile Conservation Laboratory in New York City. The 18th century tapestry, depicting "Don Quixote Freed of His Folly by Wisdom," was made by the famous Gobelins Manufactory in Paris. It is one of few representatives in the United States of the later period of Gobelins' production during the French Revolution, and it was one of only about 20 tapestries produced in the final series. The tapestry was in museum storage for more than twenty years because of its delicate condition and large size. Upon its return, it will hang in the Second Floor Living Hall—the only area of the Mansion large enough to accommodate it.

The public can learn more in the coming months about many of the Mansion's world-class treasures with a new blog series debuting on the Maymont website. Detailed descriptions of 125 significant objects, from sculptures and paintings to furniture and fine porcelain, will be published for the 125th anniversary. The Maymont Mansion is rare among historic house museums in that it never underwent major alterations after the Dooleys' time, and the bequeathed collection of nearly 1,000 furnishings and works of art remains intact. Of the objects on exhibit in the 12 restored rooms of the upper floors, approximately 98 percent are Dooley-owned pieces. Since the nonprofit Maymont Foundation took over management of the estate in 1975, many Dooley-owned items and archival materials have been added through private donations. The new website content will highlight the collection of world-class objects including the one-of-a-kind Tiffany & Co. narwhal tusk and sterling silver dressing table and chair, the richly carved 12-foot-nine-inch rosewood cabinet made in France and displayed at the 1855 Paris Universal Exposition, and Mrs. Dooley's famous Swan Bed. The blog series will begin in June at maymont.org/125-Objects.

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The Maymont Mansion is located at Maymont's Historic Estate Entrance at 1700 Hampton Street in Richmond, Virginia. Guided tours of the upstairs rooms and self-guided tours of the belowstairs exhibit are available Tuesday-Sunday from 12 to 5pm year-round. Specialty tours, group tours, temporary exhibitions, history programs, private carriage rides and seasonal early opening hours are offered as well.

For 125th anniversary event details and updates, visit maymont.org or call 804-358-7166, ext. 329.

Since 1975, Maymont has been maintained and operated by the nonprofit Maymont Foundation. To keep the estate open and free to the public, the Foundation must raise more than \$3 million each year through private donations.

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