



THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM

News Release

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For Immediate Release

BROMER GIFT OF \$2 MILLION TO ENDOW THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM'S CURATORSHIP OF RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

(Boston, Massachusetts, January 25, 2012): Anne C. and David J. Bromer have made an important gift of \$2 million to endow the Anne C. and David J. Bromer Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at the Boston Athenæum, the Athenæum announced today.

The Bromers are the proprietors of Bromer Booksellers, specializing in aesthetically significant rare books, located in Copley Square since 1980. They are noted authorities in such specialties as private press books, “fore-edge” painting, one-of-a-kind fine binding designs, early children’s books, and miniature books. Anne studied Library Science at Simmons College, and David holds three degrees, including the Ph.D., from MIT. They are longtime supporters of the Boston Athenæum.

“The Bromers are among the lucky few who found a way to turn a great passion into a successful business as well as an avocation and a scholarly pursuit,” commented Paula D. Matthews, the Boston Athenæum’s Stanford Calderwood Director and Librarian. “Their love, nurtured since their student days, has included a wide-eyed appreciation of the joys of books as

physical objects and a deep empathy for the sensuous beauty books possess at their finest.”



L to R: David J. Bromer, Anne C. Bromer, Stanley Ellis Cushing. Photo: Megan Manton.

The first Bromer Curator will be Stanley Ellis Cushing, current curator of rare books and manuscripts and a staff member of the Boston Athenæum since 1971. Cushing is the organizer of the exhibition, “Artists’ Books, Books by Artists,” which is on view in the Athenæum’s Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery until March.

“The Bromers’ gift and the appointment represent a true confluence of sympathies,” Matthews continued, “for the book as a magical *thing* with inks, textures, bindings, materials, and physical dimensions as well as words and pictures.

“Historically, most libraries have been the property of something larger: a private collector, a book-loving monarch, a government, school, or other larger institution, and subject to changes in their budgets, priorities, and tastes. Gifts like the Bromers help keep the Boston Athenæum independent, able to preserve its values and collections for generation after generation.”

“We are so honored to endow the Curatorship of Rare Books and Manuscripts, now and evermore,” said the Bromers. “That Stanley should be the present curator gives us even more pleasure. Books are more than just information. We feel the future of rare books, of books as beautiful objects,

is with book-loving institutions like the Boston Athenæum. That future is in good hands with Stanley and Paula.”

“Our gift is a perfect fit with our interests in rare books and in the values and focus of the Boston Athenæum. It is also a way to honor the legacy of a half century of conducting a rare book business in our home city of Boston.”

About the Boston Athenæum:

Founded in 1807, the Boston Athenæum is Boston’s first cultural institution. It combines an art museum, with a public exhibition gallery and collections of paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, photographs, and decorative arts; a leading research and membership library; and a civic forum including lectures, readings, panel discussions, and other events. A cultural innovator and catalyst for more than two centuries, the Athenæum was one of the three founders of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and served as the inspiration for the Boston Public Library, the first municipally-supported library in North America.

The Athenæum’s overseers and members have included some of America’s greatest literary figures, among them Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, Amy Lowell, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and such leading politicians as Presidents John Quincy Adams and John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and Senator Edward M. Kennedy. The Athenæum’s National Historic Landmark building at 10½ Beacon Street on Boston’s Beacon Hill houses collections of international importance, among them the largest surviving portion of the library of President George Washington. It holds exhibitions in its Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery and public events and readings around the year. Information about membership, programs, and hours can be found at www.bostonathenaeum.org.

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