



C.M. RUSSELL MUSEUM

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**C.M. Russell Museum Raises \$40 Million in Art & Soul Campaign**

The Museum's Largest Fundraising Campaign Exceeds Goal by \$15 Million

**Great Falls, Mont.**, March 23, 2023 — The C.M. Russell Museum announces the completion of the largest fundraising campaign in Great Falls history. The Art and Soul campaign raised \$40 million, exceeding the original campaign goal by \$15 million. The most successful fundraising endeavor in the museum's history was publicly launched in 2020 with \$17 million raised, including a cornerstone gift of \$2.5 million from Ian and Nancy Davidson – at the time, the largest cash gift in the museum's history. Over the last three years, generous donors and Charles M. Russell enthusiasts from Great Falls, the state of Montana, and across the country have rallied to show their support for the museum.

"We have been blown away by the generosity of donors who are passionate about preserving the legacy of Charlie Russell, committed to making sure the museum has a lasting home in Great Falls, and invested in growing this institution as one of the finest Western art museums in North America," said Gene Thayer, Campaign Co-Chair.

Through the [Art and Soul Campaign](#), the museum has added \$13 million to the museum's general operating endowment, which when combined with existing invested funds, brings the museum endowment to nearly \$20 million. The lead gift toward the endowment came from Jessie and Gary Van Ness who contributed \$3 million. This endowment will provide critical funding to support the day-to-day operations of the museum and ensures a firm financial footing in the long term, while lessening the reliance on yearly fundraisers such as *The Russell*.

"The Art and Soul Campaign is a testament to what can be achieved when people come together and work in unison," added Campaign Co-Chair Tom Petrie. "The museum issued a call to patrons during a time of great uncertainty and the incredible response has been truly inspiring."

Capital support was also given during the campaign, resulting in more than an acre of green space added to the museum campus – thanks to the generosity and support of Nancy and Joe Masterson. Additionally, the support of other donors allowed the entrance and atrium of the museum to be updated, as well as a variety of other facility upgrades. Gifts of art added nearly \$15 million to the campaign, including Russell masterworks *Death of a Gambler* and *The Hold Up*.

"We cannot thank the people of Great Falls, as well as our patrons in Montana and across the country, enough for this extraordinary show of support," said Tom Figarelle, C.M. Russell Museum Executive Director. "The leadership shown by our Campaign Co-chairs, Gene Thayer and Tom Petrie, has changed the museum for decades to come and has ensured that we will continue to share the wonders of Russell's West with future generations. Thank you, truly."

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**About the C.M. Russell Museum**

The C.M. Russell Museum is the first museum of Western art in the United States and traces its origins to 1930, when the log cabin studio of artist Charles Marion Russell (1864 – 1926) opened as the Russell Memorial in Great

Falls, Montana. The C.M. Russell Museum Complex has grown substantially over the decades, with the mission to share the life, art, and times of Charles M. Russell as we learn from the past, honor the present, and inspire the future cultures of Russell's West. The museum complex includes a vast collection of art, artifacts, and archival materials associated with Russell and other significant Western artists and the fully restored Russell home and studio, a National Historic Landmark. Visit [cmrussell.org](http://cmrussell.org) to learn more.