

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As a member of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Mitchell Gallery, it is my pleasure to acknowledge that the Gallery has recently gained accreditation by the *American Alliance of Museums*. Many of you may know that this accreditation was granted in April of last year, but the distinction has not yet been duly celebrated, as it should be, for this is prestigious and beneficial for the Gallery.

The American Alliance of Museums has in its jurisdiction all 17,500 museums in the US, of which only 798 (less than 5%) have been accredited. You may conclude from these numbers that the standards to be met are formidable, and the process of demonstrating that one has met them is painstaking. Only five museums in the state of Maryland, including the Walters Gallery and the Baltimore Museum of Art, have received accreditation; and the Mitchell Gallery, now one of those five, is the only accredited fine arts museum in Anne Arundel County. It took three years of rigorous self-study to supply the voluminous application materials. The process culminated in thorough interviews and inspections by an accreditation committee, who found the Mitchell Gallery worthy of this distinction.

What this means for the Gallery and the community that it serves is greater drawing power from lenders and consequently even finer exhibits. Hydee Shaller and Lucinda Edinburg, who deserve much of the credit and gratitude for the Gallery's success, can now request valuable works of art from *anywhere* in the United States, and because the Gallery is accredited by this organization, the lender will *automatically* trust that its art will be in the best professional hands here. This is a humble little gallery, but it has earned just recognition and inclusion among the proud.

So let us celebrate this happy and well-deserved honor and congratulate Hydee and Lucinda for their hard work and cheerful, dedicated service to the mission of this gallery.