



PRESS CONTACT:

Alexa Asendorf
813-957-0324
aasendorf@iaamuseum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 3, 2017

Lilly Endowment Inc. Grants \$10 Million to International African American Museum

Transformative Leadership Investment Supports Founders Fund, Endowment and Religious Programs

CHARLESTON, S.C. (October 3, 2017) – Today, the International African American Museum (IAAM) announced a \$10 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The most substantial investment from a private donor to date, the grant fortifies the museum in four ways: \$5 million will support this institution’s design and construction through our Founders Fund; \$4 million will be used to create an endowment; \$500,000 will fund the museum’s inaugural changing exhibit on African-American religion and music; and \$500,000 will be allocated to efforts to engage congregations and faith-based communities.

“This contribution, which comes to us here in the South from the Midwest, from one of our nation’s most esteemed foundations, resoundingly affirms the vital mission of the International African American Museum,” said Michael Boulware Moore, IAAM president and CEO.

A large portion of the grant – \$4 million – will be used to create the IAAM’s endowment, which the museum hopes to grow to \$25 million. Lilly Endowment’s \$4 million will help fund ongoing activities with scholars, consultants and religious leaders to support curation and programming related to religion and spirituality.

“We are grateful that the grant from Lilly Endowment moves the IAAM closer to its historic groundbreaking,” said Joseph P. Riley Jr., former Charleston mayor and IAAM board member. “But we are equally grateful that the grant helps the museum begin to build an endowment that will ensure stability and longevity.”

Since its founding in 1937, Lilly Endowment has been committed to causes in education, community development and religion and has made grants to cultural institutions that foster a deeper public understanding of the role of religion in American life.

Lilly Endowment took an interest in the museum in part because of its unique location resting above the sacred ground of Gadsden's Wharf, a site where hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans disembarked, taking their first steps into America. Religion is an inescapable dimension of this story.

“The IAAM is establishing a museum and memorial gardens that will tell and preserve many important stories about the contributions of Americans of African descent to our national life,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion, “We are pleased that that the grant will support the IAAM in lifting up the role that religion and spirituality has played in shaping these stories and support outreach to religious communities.”

The IAAM is slated to break ground in early 2018 and open its doors to the public in 2020. For more information about the museum, please visit www.iaamuseum.org.

About the IAAM:

Nearly half of all enslaved Africans forced to America through the Transatlantic Slave Trade arrived in Charleston, and the vast majority disembarked at Gadsden's Wharf, the future home of the International African American Museum (IAAM) and one of the most significant and sacred sites of the African American experience in the Western hemisphere. The IAAM, a museum, memorial and site of conscience, will present unvarnished history and culture, commemorate and celebrate the foundational role that Africans and their descendants played in the making of America, and highlight their diasporic connections around the world. It will include immersive, interactive exhibits engaging to all ages and feature the Center for Family History, a leading genealogy archive that will help visitors identify their individual threads in the complex tapestry of history.

About the Lilly Endowment:

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family – J.K. Lilly Sr., and sons J.K. Jr. and Eli – through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.

###