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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOULS GROWN DEEP FOUNDATION EXPANDS MISSION OF PROMOTING THE ARTWORK OF ARTISTS FROM THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOUTH

Foundation's New Strategic Plan Incorporates Fostering Positive Economic and Social Outcomes for the Artists and Their Communities

Board Elects Gee's Bend Quilter Mary Margaret Pettway as New Chair and Initiates Grant Program

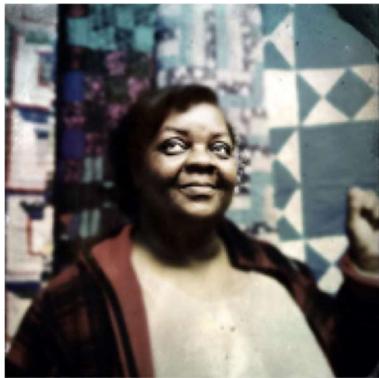
May 22, 2018 (Atlanta, GA) – At its Annual Meeting in New York City yesterday, the Board of Trustees of the Souls Grown Deep Foundation (SGDF) approved a framework for the Foundation to expand its mission, including the adoption of a new strategic plan that builds on the Foundation's existing program of transferring work by artists from the African-American South into museum collections. New initiatives include improving the socio-economic conditions of these artists and their communities, initiating a new grant program, and electing artist Mary Margaret Pettway as the new Board Chair. The Board also announced the acquisition of 34 works from its collection by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts through its ongoing gift/purchase program.

"The Souls Grown Deep Foundation was formed to promote the work of artists from the African-American South and to advocate for their rightful place in the narrative of American art history," said Dr. Maxwell L. Anderson, president of the Foundation. "As we continue this work, we believe that a natural extension of our mission is to find ways to serve the communities in which these artists and their families live and work. We are excited to develop new programs that advance these goals under the leadership of our new Chair, Mary Margaret Pettway."

Souls Grown Deep Foundation is the only nonprofit organization dedicated to documenting, preserving, exhibiting, and promoting the work of artists from the African-American South. The Foundation holds the largest and foremost collection of works of African-American artists from the southern United States,

encompassing over 1,100 works by more than 160 artists. In addition, their collection of archival photographs, videos, and documents relating to the artists in the collection has been gifted to the [Southern Folklife Collection](#) at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. At present, it contains over 10,000 items and its transfer is ongoing. In 2014, the Foundation began to develop opportunities for major museums to add works from its collection, first with an acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Many of these works will be on view in the museum's exhibition, [History Refused to Die: Highlights from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation Gift](#) (May 22 – September 23, 2018). A \$10,000 grant from SGDF provided travel funds for several artists and their families to attend the opening. Other museums around the country have subsequently added works to their collections through a combination of gifts and purchases, including the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, High Museum of Art, New Orleans Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and, most recently, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

New Board Chair



Mary Margaret Pettway will serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Souls Grown Deep Foundation from 2018 through 2020. Born and raised in Gee's Bend (Boykin), Alabama, Pettway is a third-generation quilter. She is a member of the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective, founded in 2003 to promote and market quilts from the community of Gee's Bend.

In the mid 2000s she worked for the Wilcox County Regional Commission; she now leads quilting workshops and lectures throughout the Southeast and is a regular instructor at Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center in Camden, Alabama.

Since becoming a Trustee in 2017, she, along with SGDF's Senior Research Associate Mary McCarthy, has spearheaded SGDF's efforts to locate living Gee's Bend quilters with work in the SGDF Collection (or their heirs) in order to assist them in obtaining representation for their copyrights through SGDF's partnership with the Artists Rights Society. In this time, the number of artists or estates represented by Artists Rights Society has increased to 72, nearly double the number represented in 2016.

Ms. Pettway is the daughter of Lucy T. Pettway, whose quilts are featured prominently in *Gee's Bend: The Women and Their Quilts*, *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*, and *Gee's Bend: The Architecture of the Quilt*, and have been featured in numerous museum exhibitions. Quilts by Lucy T. were acquired from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2014, the High Museum of Art in 2017, and the Virginia Museum of Arts in 2018. Mary Margaret lives in Boykin, Alabama with her daughter Jade and son Kyle.

2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan

Following the multi-month efforts of a Task Force led by newly elected Treasurer Linley Jones, the Board adopted a three-year strategic plan. Central to the plan is the continued transfer of works from the Foundation's collection to leading art museums across the United States. The Foundation will also continue its advocacy of artists in its collection by supporting research, educational, and scholarly

initiatives. Recognizing that the historic marginalization of these artists is inextricably linked to broader racial, political, and socio-economic disenfranchisement—the very themes of much of their art—the Foundation is expanding into a new dimension of activity to take steps to realize positive economic and social outcomes for the artists in its collection and their communities. A summary of the plan is available at www.soulsgrowndeep.org/foundation.

Grant Program

In furtherance of its new commitment to address socio-economic challenges within the communities that gave rise to the art in the collection, the Foundation is initiating a grant program. It has begun to develop a plan to improve living conditions in Gee's Bend, AL. Other areas of grant activity will be announced throughout the 2018 – 2019 fiscal year.

Newest Museum Acquisition

The [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts](#) is the latest art museum to make an acquisition from the Foundation, joining six other leading museums in the United States that have added works to their permanent collections. The partial gift/partial purchase of 34 works includes pieces by Thornton Dial, Lonnie Holley, Ronald Lockett, Jimmy Lee Sudduth, and Purvis Young, among others, as well as quilts by multiple generations of the quilters of Gee's Bend, Alabama. The new acquisitions will be on view at the VMFA in an exhibition in June 2019.

About the Souls Grown Deep Foundation

The Souls Grown Deep Foundation is the only nonprofit organization dedicated to documenting, preserving, exhibiting, and promoting the artwork by artists from the African-American South. The Foundation holds the largest and foremost collection of works of African-American artists from the Southern United States, encompassing over 1,100 works by more than 160 artists. The Foundation advances its mission by advocating the contributions of these artists in the canon of American art history, accomplished through collection transfers, scholarship, exhibitions, education, public programs, and publications. Through grants and other initiatives, the Foundation has also extended its mission to serve those communities that gave rise to the visual traditions of the artists represented in its collection. For more information, visit www.soulsgrowndeep.org.

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