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BOWERS MUSEUM RECEIVES TWO GENEROUS BEQUESTS TOTALING OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO SUPPORT FUTURE DISTINGUISHED LECTURES



Norma Kershaw



Lynda Thomas

September 20, 2021 (Santa Ana, California) – The Bowers Museum in Orange County, California is pleased to announce two generous bequests from former Board of Governors, Norma Kershaw and Lynda Thomas totaling over one million dollars. The bequests have been designated to support the \$250,000 Kershaw International Speakers’ Series on Archaeology Biblical, and the \$780,000 Lynda Thomas Distinguished Lecture Fund to bring newsmakers from around the world to the Bowers Museum. In most instances, these speakers will be related to current special exhibitions, and will possibly be kicked off with programming in conjunction of the Museum’s Royal Geographical Society exhibition, *Everest*, due to open in February 2022.

Norma Kershaw was a long-time member of the Bowers’ Board of Governors who sponsored the state-of-the-art, 300-seat Norma Kershaw Auditorium, which will undoubtedly host all of the distinguished lectures. Norma had a lifelong passion for Biblical Archaeology and was responsible for funding Professorships at UCSD and UCLA, as well as being instrumental in the formation of the Archaeological Institute of America.

Lynda Thomas was also a long-time member of the Bowers Museum’s Board of Governors with a passion for world affairs and world travel. She set the tone for the Lynda Thomas Distinguished Lecture series when she hosted former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright several years ago. The Museum hopes to maintain this level of scholarship with all the Thomas Speakers.

Norma Kershaw (1924 – 2020)

Norma was born in New York City on New Year’s Eve in 1924. After helping her husband Reuben grow his real estate development business in Great Neck, and after rearing their children (Barbara and Janet), she went back to school. She completed the B.A. degree (Phi Beta Kappa) in anthropology and art history at

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Queens College in 1972. Two years later, she earned the M.A. degree in art history and archaeology from Columbia University.

Norma enjoyed being at the center of cutting-edge archaeology in the United States. In 1968, she helped establish the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) Long Island Society, where she served as president from 1977 to 1981. In 1976, she became a life-member of the AIA and received their distinguished Martha and Artemis Joukowsky Distinguished Service Award in 1989. From 1980 to 1985 Norma served as the travel editor of the AIA's *ARCHAEOLOGY* magazine. She also served as a founding editorial board member of *Biblical Archaeology Review* until she passed away. Shortly after moving to southern California, Norma founded the AIA's Orange County Society in 1991, serving as its first president, and in 1992 joined the AIA Governing Board. In 1996, she was named the first female (and up until now, the only) Trustee Emerita of the AIA. It was her desire to share the significance of archaeology for world culture that infused Norma's drive to play a role in so many of these scholarly institutions and museums.¹



Tom Levy, Norma Kershaw, James Cameron, and Suzy Amis at Bowers Museum

Norma's earliest contribution to the Bowers Museum dates to 1992 and she continued to support up to her passing. She also played an integral role in bringing *The Holy Land: David Roberts, Dead Sea Scrolls, House of David Inscription* to the Bowers Museum in 2001-2002. Norma passed away peacefully at her home in Mission Viejo, CA on September 14, at age 95. She is survived by her two daughters (Barbara Tiferet Rosenthal and Janet Kershaw McClennan), her son-in-law (Jeffrey Rosenthal), her four grandchildren, and her two great grandchildren.

Lynda Thomas (1950 – 2021)

Born on March 25, 1950, to Louis and Dorothy Levy, Lynda grew up in New Orleans. She was a Senior Manager/CPA/Consultant at Deloitte Haskins and Sells in London. She also traveled extensively with the Pacific Council on International Policy, and the National Democratic Institute. Over the past several years, these visits included North Korea, South Sudan, Myanmar, Cuba, Argentina, Poland, Germany, and the Balkans. Lynda served as an international election monitor in Tunisia for parliamentary elections in 2011, and for their first post-revolution direct presidential election in 2014.

Committed to helping children, Lynda volunteered as a Court-Appointed Special Advocate to promote the best interests of abused and neglected youth. Lynda also had a passion for the arts, and was on the boards of the Bowers Museum, Backhausdance, and the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz previously known as the Thelonious Monk Institute. Lynda's earliest contribution to the Bowers dates back more than a decade, and she went on to become a stalwart supporter of exhibitions, programming and more.

Lynda Thomas passed away peacefully at the home she shared with her beloved fiancé, Stuart Subotnick. She is survived by her sister Liz, her brothers Louis, Larry, & Leslie, her daughters Aimée & Angélique, and her son Lee.



Madeleine Albright and Lynda Thomas at Bowers' 2012 Annual Board Dinner

¹ Excerpt from *Remembering Norma Kershaw* by Thomas E. Levy, Distinguished Professor and Norma Kershaw Chair in the Archaeology of Ancient Israel and Neighboring Lands, University of California San Diego.