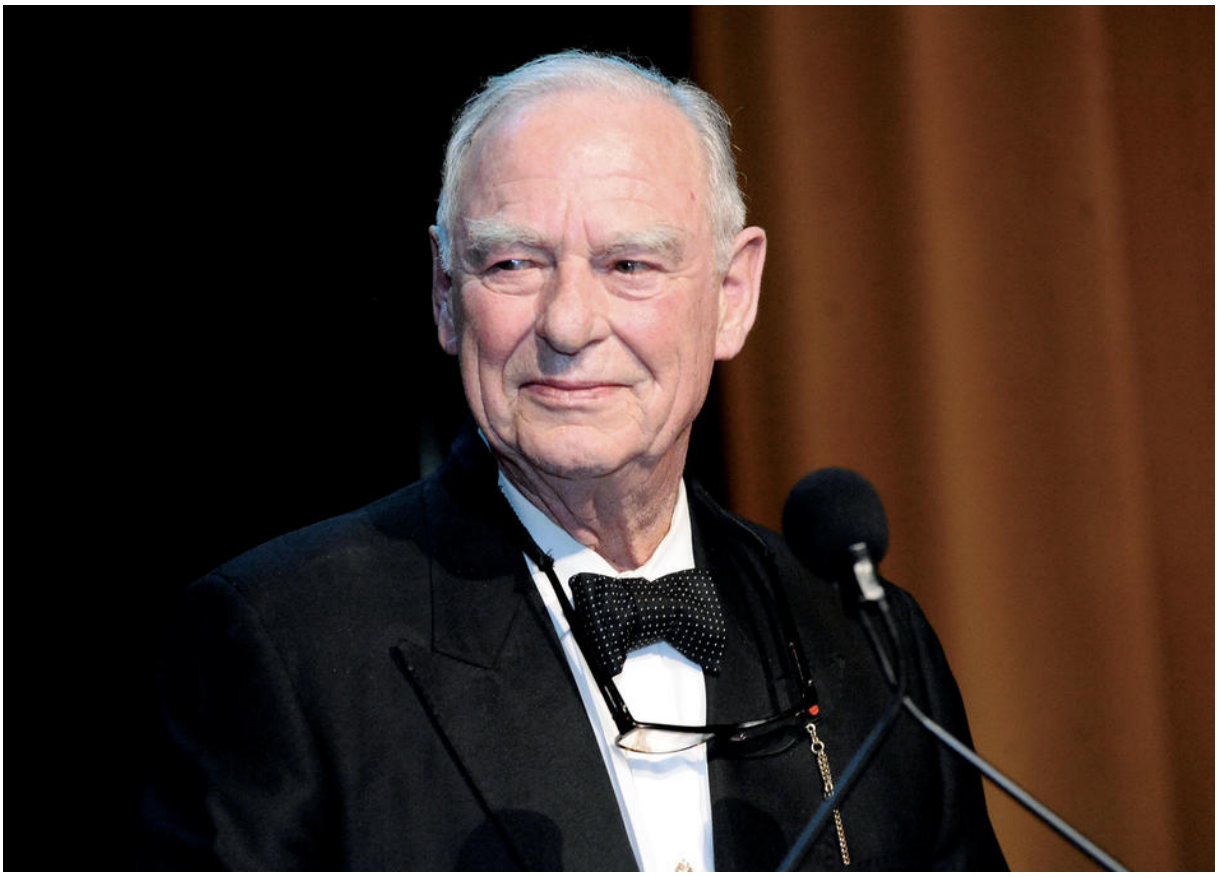
On Campus

Lenfest Pledges $30 Million for New Arts Building

Winter 2011-12



Gerry Lenfest at the November Hamilton Dinner. (Eileen Barroso)

One of Columbia’s most generous benefactors has given the University its largest gift ever for the arts: a $30 million pledge for a new exhibition and performance venue.

The latest gift from H. F. “Gerry” Lenfest ’58LAW, ’09HON, a University Trustee who has donated to Columbia more than $100 million over the years, will support the construction of a six-floor, 53,000-square-foot building on the new Manhattanville campus. The building, to be named the Lenfest Center for the Arts, will be located on a public plaza being created on West 125th Street between Broadway and 12th

Avenue, and will be used primarily for showcasing the works of students and faculty, as well as those of visiting artists. It will contain a gallery; a film screening room; a versatile dance and performance space; and a presentation area for readings, symposiums, and seminars.

“The Lenfest Center will be a fantastic venue for our programs,” says Carol Becker, dean of the School of the Arts. “It’s going to allow us to reach new audiences and to build relationships with local communities. And it will offer the possibility of live performances, film screenings, readings, and exhibitions all under one roof.”

The gift was announced on November 17 at Columbia College’s annual Alexander Hamilton Dinner, at which Lenfest was given the College’s highest honor, the Alexander Hamilton Medal.

“The breadth of Gerry Lenfest’s philanthropy and generosity to Columbia is truly remarkable,” says President Lee C. Bollinger. “From the law school he attended to the humanities and sciences, from the Earth Institute to our medical center, Gerry has provided the sustainable source of energy for excellence across a diversity of University life and scholarship. This latest gift not only reflects the extraordinary leadership in the arts that he and his wife, Marguerite, have long demonstrated in their home city of Philadelphia, it ensures that our thriving School of the Arts will finally have a facility that matches its astonishing creativity, and the University will have a vital new space for engagement in the robust cultural life of Harlem.”

The Lenfest Center for the Arts is being designed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano. It will be built as part of the first phase of the Manhattanville campus’s construction.



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