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A NEW FACE IN THE ARTS COMMUNITY

Judy L. Larson begins work this week as the new director of the Reynolds Gallery and the first holder of the R. Anthony Askew Chair in Art. Larson, most recently the director of the National Museum of Women in the Arts [NMWA] in Washington, D.C., will also teach art history courses. The founding director of Reynolds, Tony Askew, has retired after 26 years at Westmont.

As the director of the NMWA from 2002 to 2007, Larson is credited with completing a 25 million dollar endowment campaign and enriching the museum's exhibition schedule to include thematic exhibitions and new artistic fields. She co-organized a popular exhibition, "Nordic Cool: Hot Women Designers," which was among the most successful exhibitions in NMWA's 21-year history. She was active in the formation of new national and international committees, which advocate for women in the arts. In 2007, she successfully nominated the museum for a National Award from the Institute of Museums and Library Services.

"I feel I am coming to Westmont at the perfect time," says Larson. "The plans for the new Adams Center for the Visual Arts will change the face of the Westmont campus, making arts literally at the center of things. My favorite role as a museum director is working with collectors and actively forming and shaping the permanent collection. I have already met both collectors and art council members who share my excitement about the future."

Larson previously directed the Art Museum of Western Virginia in Roanoke, where she coordinated the acquisition of a multi-million dollar American art collection. She has also served as curator of American art at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, where she organized national touring exhibitions on American artists such as John Twachtman and Norman Rockwell.

Larson worked at the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art while earning undergraduate and master's degrees in art

history at UCLA. In 1980 she served as guest curator at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. She completed a Ph.D. at the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts at Emory University, Atlanta, in 1998.

“I am excited to have Judy Larson as our newest department member,” says art department chair Susan Savage. “I am very confident that Judy’s energy, exceptional credentials, and high caliber of expertise will support, enhance and enrich our academic offerings and the Santa Barbara community at large.”

Larson’s role at Westmont will include building the college’s permanent art collection and furthering the development of the gallery’s exhibition program. She will also guide the gallery’s move into the Adams Center for the Visual Arts, slated for completion by 2011.

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