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## ***Major bequest for Art Gallery of Greater Victoria Received from Estate of Rosita LeSueur Tovell***

Late Victoria art lover and philanthropist **Rosita LeSueur Tovell** (1919-2014) has bequeathed \$1.1 million to the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria to support the Gallery's continuing exhibitions and programming.

The bequest, the largest in Art Gallery of Greater Victoria history, was announced today by AGGV Board Chair, Ruth Wittenberg, who expressed her gratitude to Ms. Tovell and her family. "We are extremely grateful to Rosita Tovell, during her lifetime she was a valued Gallery volunteer and donor, and her extraordinary bequest will allow us to celebrate her life with a variety of innovative exhibitions and programming."

Rosita Tovell was the wife of the late Freeman Massey Tovell, a Canadian Diplomat. In this role Rosita lived in several countries, the most personally significant were two postings in Peru which allowed her to explore and enjoy the heritage of her mother's homeland and family. Rosita was a passionate advocate of the visual arts, a discerning collector and supporter of artists in many communities in which she lived. In Ottawa she was a founder of the National Gallery Association (now Friends of the National Gallery), and member of the Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Canada. Rosita made donations to the National Gallery of Canada and established a fund to purchase work by contemporary First Nations artists. Rosita and Freeman moved to Victoria in 1978 which began her long association with the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

"From the moment Rosita Tovell arrived in Victoria in 1978, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria held a special place in her world. As a member of the Board during the 1980's and as a long time member of the Art Acquisition Committee, she fully embraced the Gallery and it, in turn, fully embraced her," said Rosemarie Tovell, Rosita's daughter. "My mother loved its staff, its intimate size, and appreciated its efforts at contributing towards the life of Victoria. It was the perfect fit for her. Here at the AGGV Mum felt she could make – and indeed did make - a positive difference."

As directed by Rosita's will, the bequest will be used for collections and exhibitions. "Rosita's philanthropic leadership will allow us to develop incredible new exhibitions for the AGGV both now and in our new building," said Jon Tupper, AGGV Director. "We hope to reflect Rosita's interests in South American art as well as British Columbia First Nations art as we develop the exhibitions and programming supported by her gift."

"Strong cultural institutions like the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria create vibrant, thriving communities," said Peter Fassbender, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. "Rosita Tovell's tremendous gift exemplifies the generosity of spirit and great value that B.C.'s philanthropists bring to our creative sector."

For more information, visit [www.aggv.ca](http://www.aggv.ca).

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