

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 5, 2005

CONTACT: Kim Newman, Public Relations
Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts
556 Parkway / Gatlinburg / TN 37738
Phone: 865-436-5860 x34

ARROWMONT AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS GRANT

FUNDS WILL HELP PRESERVE HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND ARTS LITERACY IN THE SMOKIES

Gatlinburg, Tenn. - In 1910, the Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women worked to open the first school to serve the families in and around Gatlinburg. Thanks to a nearly quarter-million dollar grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), this important story about the history of education and arts literacy in the Smokies will be preserved and accessible to all.

The project, *From Pi Beta Phi to Arrowmont: Bringing Education and Economic Development to The Great Smoky Mountains, 1910-2004*, will create a web site with a fully searchable online archives of selected letters, diaries, photographs and other materials that document the history of the Pi Beta Phi Settlement School and the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, Tenn. Principal investigators Ken Wise and Anne Bridges, University of Tennessee librarians, will work to complete the project with David Willard director of Arrowmont School, and Glenn Bogart, principal of Pi Beta Phi Elementary School in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

Initial archive work at Arrowmont by Ashley Warriner, intern for the University of Tennessee's Special Collections Library in the summer of 2003, helped establish Arrowmont's archive and secure the eligibility for this type of grant.

The grant project complements two ongoing endeavors at the UT Libraries, the Digital Library Center and the Great Smoky Mountain Regional Project. "We see this grant as a way to bring information about the Smokies to the broader public," said Anne Bridges, a principal investigator on the grant. "Promoting the history of the area will give both local citizens and the thousands of visitors an opportunity to look beyond the present-day Smokies and appreciate how the region has developed."

Long before Gatlinburg became a bustling tourist town, the mountain hamlet and the people who lived there were somewhat isolated from the world around them. "This grant will provide the financial resources and opportunities to research the colorful and significant history that we have in Gatlinburg," Glenn Bogart, principal of Pi Beta Phi Elementary said. The grant will also work to develop instructional units based on the web site, so that the information can be fully integrated into classroom lessons. Being knowledgeable about the past says Bogart, "will improve the quality of life in Gatlinburg as well as provide an impetus for continued economic prosperity."

-more-

Grant cont'd...page 2

It was the Pi Phi's early interest in fostering the indigenous craft traditions of the local people, while providing basic education, that the plan for a summer crafts workshop evolved in 1945. Then in 1960, when the Sevier County Board of Education assumed control of education for children in the area, the fraternity changed the focus of the school to fine arts and crafts education, founding Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts.

Arrowmont attracts a diverse group of students, from professional artists to novices, who travel from all over the country to attend classes. "This school has impacted so many people in the community," David Willard, director of Arrowmont School said. "We have a significant story to tell, and this project is a great way for us to let the world know about it."

"This grant will not only help tell an important story, but it also helps illustrate the role of the emerging virtual library," Barbara Dewey, Dean of Libraries at UT, said. "The collaborations of the UT Libraries, the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, and the Pi Beta Phi Elementary School are an amazing example of sharing unique resources and expertise," she said.

Work will begin in early January and will continue through 2006. Arrowmont is planning to apply for another grant after the work is completed to mount a major exhibition illustrating the history of the school and the region. "We have a wonderful story to tell that starts with Pi Phis bringing education to a remote area, to one of the best known craft schools in the country," David Willard, Arrowmont Director, said. As Arrowmont looks forward to their Bicentennial celebration in 2012, "This will also provide a great beginning to a book we would like to publish in the future," said Willard.

Currently, the archive at Arrowmont is available to the public by appointment only, for purposes of research. The archive is divided into the following areas: Pi Beta Phi Settlement School; Arrowcraft History; Early Healthcare; Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts; and Arrowmont's Permanent Collection, comprised of historical craft objects and contemporary craft objects exemplary of the School's teachings through the years. Arrowmont is actively seeking documents, pictures and objects relating to these topics to be included in their archive. Contact Arrowmont if you would like to contribute.

"National Leadership Grants of IMLS help museums and libraries excel as learning institutions that support the needs of a nation of learners," Robert Martin, Director of the IMLS, said. "The grants we make today reflect an understanding of current issues in the library field and suggest creative solutions through the application of technology, creative collaboration, data collection, and projects that seek a better understanding of the informational needs of library users."

-more-

Grant cont'd...page 3

Library National Leadership Grants for Research and Demonstration encourage strong proposals for research in library and information science and for demonstration projects to test potential solutions to problems in real-world situations. National Leadership Grant projects provide creative solutions to issues of national importance and provide leadership for other organizations to emulate. The Institute of Museum and Library Services, is an independent federal grant-making agency that is dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities. To learn more about IMLS, visit <http://www.imls.gov>.

For additional information about the institutions, visit:

Pi Beta Phi Elementary School—www.pbp.sevier.org

Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts—www.arrowmont.org

Great Smoky Mountains Regional Project—www.lib.utk.edu/smokies/

###