

CULTURE BRIGHT:

A SUMMER ESSAY SERIES

Reflections on art, culture, and the future of the Quad Cities from **Jen Lewis-Snyder**, President & CEO of The Cultural Trust.

What Excellence Looks Like

We've Had Nationally Recognized Excellence All Along

Tomorrow evening, hundreds of people will gather at the Figge Art Museum for the Art at Heart Gala. This year's inspiration: Raven.

Culture Champions will dress up, celebrate, bid generously, and support one of our region's most beloved institutions.

But before the evening begins, let's talk about something bigger.

There's a \$116 million investment moving through the National Gallery of Art right now.

The goal is simple.

Take world-class works of art out of storage and place them in select museums across America.

Funded.

Structured.

Built to last.

The Figge Art Museum is one of those museums.

Let that sink in.

Out of thousands of art museums across the United States, the National Gallery selected a small group of institutions capable of participating at the highest level.

That decision was not random.

The National Gallery looked for museums that could:

- Properly care for significant works of art
- Build compelling exhibitions
- Deliver exceptional visitor experiences
- Advance scholarships and education
- Represent collections at a national level

The Figge checked every box.

Because what started as an exhibition has evolved into something much larger.

The relationship now includes educator engagement, professional development, curatorial collaboration, and national networking opportunities that connect the Quad Cities directly to one of the most respected cultural institutions in the world.

Today, visitors can experience The Golden Age: Featuring Northern European Works from the National Gallery of Art alongside A Golden Age for Whom?, a companion exhibition that invites contemporary artists into the conversation.

That is what national trust looks like.

But here's what matters most.

This didn't suddenly happen.

The Figge didn't wake up one day and become exceptional.

It took decades.

Leadership.

Philanthropy.

Volunteers.

Donors.

Community support.

Long-term investment.

It took people who believed arts and culture deserved to exist here at the highest level.

And that's where The Cultural Trust enters the story.

What the National Gallery is doing nationally, The Cultural Trust has been doing regionally for nearly two decades.

They invest in institutions.

We invest in institutions.

They strengthen ecosystems.

We strengthen ecosystems.

They expand access.

We expand access.

Different scale.

Same philosophy.

Long-term thinking works.



“What if the Quad Cities stopped thinking of itself as a small market and started recognizing itself as a place worthy of national attention and investment?”

The National Gallery looked across America and selected the Figge.

We've believed in them all along.

Tomorrow night at the Raven Ball, while the room fills with beautiful gowns, generous supporters, and excitement for what's ahead, remember this:

You're not simply attending a gala.

You're celebrating an institution operating at a nationally recognized standard.

You're celebrating what happens when a community chooses to invest in itself.

And maybe that's the bigger story.

What if the Quad Cities stopped thinking of itself as a small market and started recognizing itself as a place worthy of national attention and investment?

Because that story is already being written.

To learn more about The Cultural Trust and its Legacy Partners, go to CultureBright.org.



The Cultural Trust

