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**MIDCENTURY MODERN DESIGN, ITALIAN CERAMICS AND HISTORIC KENNEDY RUG
LAUNCH TRAVELING EXHIBITS CENTER IN NEW HOME FURNISHINGS HALL OF FAME**

HIGH POINT, N.C., April 21, 2023 — Three temporary traveling exhibits exploring major moments and trends in home furnishings and interior design will be in the spotlight when the new American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame building opens its doors April 22 in High Point, N.C.

An ever-evolving display of exhibits from around the world, the Traveling Exhibits Center is located on the first floor of the Hall of Fame. The first three exhibits to be showcased feature an eclectic mix of themes, ranging from midcentury modern design and Italian ceramics to an historic rug that once graced the floor of the Kennedy White House.

“Our traveling exhibits will explore some aspect of fashion and design to inspire visitors with their intriguing and engaging themes,” says Karen McNeill, CEO and president of the Hall of Fame Board of Directors. “This space will be continually changing, giving visitors – the industry and consumers alike – reasons to repeatedly return to see what’s new at the Hall of Fame.”

These are the first three exhibits to be featured:

- **Italian Ceramics – A Rich Story.** Curated and developed by David Gebhart, CEO and founder of home accents resource Global Views, this exhibit was created to highlight the advent and rapid growth of the market for Italian ceramic products that developed in the U.S. after the end of World War II.

Italy was devastated by the second World War. To help rebuild the country, Italy was included in the Marshall Plan, which pumped hundreds of millions of dollars of aid into its economy from 1948 until the early 1950s, including some funding that helped rebuild and open new ceramic factories in devastated towns throughout the countryside.

During the early 1950s, the country’s domestic market, bolstered somewhat by tourists, was the most important market for handmade, mass-produced Italian ceramics. But that dynamic changed quickly as clever importers realized the cachet that the “Made in Italy” label held for their clientele abroad. A number of companies began to import and distribute Italian ceramics within the United States, including Raymor and Rosenthal-Netter, which formed close relationships with major ceramic producers across Italy. Today, other importers, retailers and distributors have established new and emerging relationships with these same ceramic factories.

The Hall of Fame exhibit focuses on handmade yet mass-produced ceramic items from Italy made in the 1950s through the 1970s. Each item has its own interesting story to tell – whether it be the

form and shape of the objects, the glazes used, the hand-painted techniques employed or the incredible hand carving necessary to produce these pieces of art.

The exhibit includes a look back at how Italian vases were adapted into lamps. The trend emerged in the 1950s-1970s, when importers asked ceramic designers and workers in various factories to seal the tops of vases while leaving a small hole and adding additional holes in the bottoms and sides. The artisans had no idea what they were creating at the time. These seemingly odd, sealed vases became great sellers for the factories – as the importers then converted them into lamps stateside. It was only a short time before lamp base making became a huge business for the factories as well as the importers and distributors.

In addition, the Hall of Fame exhibit explores the future of Italian ceramics and glazes, highlighting the work of young emerging companies and artisans, including Chiara Ghiretti. Examples of Ghiretti's work include the use of hyper-reactive glazes on platters and the technique of glazing glass into the surface of ceramic tiles. Ceramic glazes and innovative techniques for production combine art with chemistry with imagination – creating newness and excitement.

- **“The Kings of Mod,”** showcasing the pioneering collaboration of American furniture designer Milo Baughman (1923-2003) and local furniture maker and Hall of Fame Inductee Thayer Coggin (1922-2003).

After serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, Thayer Coggin returned to his hometown of High Point to start his eponymously named furniture company with a vision to create modern, American furniture that would prove timeless in appeal and built to last generations. He soon established a long, fruitful partnership with designer Milo Baughman. Also an Army veteran, Baughman had established himself in 1940s' California as an important arbiter of modern style in America, becoming a leader in the California Style design movement.

Together, these two men developed a new design vocabulary for midcentury America that would have a profound influence on the future of all home furnishings. Using glamorous, new materials paired with groundbreaking and prescient designs, Baughman and Coggin created some of the most iconic, modern furniture of the midcentury era. Their success earned Baughman many monikers, including “the mod king of American furniture” and “the dean of furniture designers.”

The Hall of Fame temporary exhibit, features some of the most iconic pieces from the Baughman and Coggin partnership, showcasing the timeless elegance, quality and innovation that made both men legends in the world of American home furnishings. “My father, Thayer, and Milo had a special relationship for 50 years, collaborating on some ground-breaking designs that remain cornerstones in American-made, modern furniture,” said Royale Wiggin, president of Thayer Coggin.

Previously, Baughman's work has been exhibited in “Good Design” at the Museum of Modern Art and in “High Styles: Twentieth Century American Design” at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The men's collaborative work continues to be produced in the Thayer Coggin workshops in High Point, and the company celebrates its 70th anniversary this year.

- **The Kennedy Rug.** An elegant, 19th-century Victorian needlepoint floral rug that once graced the floor of the White House during the John F. Kennedy presidency, this vintage, historic rug is on loan to the Hall of Fame by floor covering and home accent resource Nourison and the Peykar family, owners of the company.

Alex Peykar, CEO of Nourison, purchased the rug in 1996 at an estate auction held by Sotheby's for the furnishings and other personal belongings of the late Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Onassis was an American socialite, writer, photographer and book editor who served as the first lady of the United States from 1961 to 1963, as the wife of President John F. Kennedy.

Measuring 7' by 8'4", the rug being shown in the Traveling Exhibits Center features a rich, crimson ground with ivory floral cartouches. Cream scrollwork forms the design of the inner border, with eagles at each corner, complemented by a delicate floral garland border with mask rosettes at each outer corner.

The rug graced the floor of the White House's Yellow Oval Room during the Kennedy administration. First used as a drawing room in the John Adams administration, the Yellow Oval Room has served over the years as a library, office and family parlor as well as a place to greet dignitaries. One such gathering took place in 1963, when six of the seven original Mercury mission astronauts appeared in a photo taken in the room with the Kennedy family's rug featured prominently in the foreground.

"We are so excited to be able to share this piece of history with the industry during the April 22-26 High Point Market and the community at large once market ends," says McNeill.

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The American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc., is an industry-wide organization founded to preserve its history, to celebrate exceptional individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the U.S. home furnishings industry, to inspire the next generation of innovative leaders and to engage the community with the world of home furnishings. In 2019, the organization purchased a building at 311 S. Hamilton St. in High Point. Our new home will be a symbol of the Home Furnishings Capital of the World™ where the industry gathers, where we tell our story and learn from our past, and where we inspire future generations. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, funds support our history and leadership programming. The organization is based in High Point, North Carolina, at 311 S. Hamilton St., and can be reached at 336.882.5900. Watch for ongoing developments and details about the grand opening of a new permanent home at www.homefurnishingshalloffame.com in April 2023.

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