



ELIZABETH CITY AREA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

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**North Carolina's Art Pottery Exhibition Brings Unique
Works by Talented Potters to One Location
--Exhibition opens May 14 at the Museum of the Albemarle
in Elizabeth City, N.C.--**

(Elizabeth City, N.C., April 4, 2011) – North Carolina's rich art pottery tradition will have a turn in the spotlight when the Museum of the Albemarle opens *Formed, Fired and Finished*, May 14, 2011 in Elizabeth City. The exhibition, which will be up for a year, will feature a collection of more than 90 pottery pieces on loan from Dr. Everett James and Dr. Nancy Farmer, of Chapel Hill. Showcasing unusual works by talented potters, it will be the first and largest showing of North Carolina pottery in Eastern North Carolina.

"This is a rare opportunity to see unique works by some of North Carolina's preeminent potters in one location," said Museum of the Albemarle Administrator Ed Merrell.

North Carolina's art pottery tradition traces its lineage to the 1760s when immigrant potters, mostly from England and Germany, settled their families in Central North Carolina, known today as the Seagrove area. Living on remote farms built on rich deposits of clay, the families made pottery for sale and trade. This traditional ceramic ware was used up to the early 20th century when a movement known as Arts and Crafts was sweeping the country. With an eye toward traditional craftsmanship and simple forms, the potters adopted the movement and began converting their traditional pottery forms into stylized shapes with a new palette of glazes.

“The potters converted jugs, butter churns and storage jars into decorative ceramics. They called the new forms ‘fancy ware,’ and today it is known as North Carolina art pottery,” said Don Pendergraft, Museum of the Albemarle exhibit design chief. “This transition helped keep North Carolina’s oldest continuous industry alive and thriving. The exhibit is a visual testament to their determination to remain in control of their destinies.”

The collection of James and Farmer is based on this time period and includes pieces from the eastern Piedmont families; Cravens, Coles, Owen (Owens), Aumans, and Teagues, from the Catawba Valley region; Hiltons, List, Propst, Ritchie, Reinhardt, and Craig, well-known Seagrove and Catawba Valley potters who embraced the “fancy ware” tradition. A few pieces of Catawba and Cherokee Indian will be displayed to examine the influences of tourist and the change to fancy ware. These regions made the most art pottery and are connected by the Hilton family, who worked and transferred ideas from Seagrove to Catawba.

About the Collectors

Both James and Farmer, who are married, are avid collectors with familial ties to North Carolina. James, a renowned radiology physician grew up in Robersonville, N.C., and the nearby town of Jamesville is named for his family. He has instructed at Harvard, Johns Hopkins, University College London and Vanderbilt. Farmer, from Norwood, in Stanley County, has been an educator at all levels—counselor, teacher, principal and associate superintendent.

Their appreciation for art began when they lived and taught for several years in Europe. There, they enjoyed visiting galleries and started collecting English watercolors. When they returned to North Carolina, their attention turned to American art, folk art and art pottery, amassing an impressive collection. In 1993, James established St. James Place, a restored historic, primitive Baptist church in his hometown, where he exhibits all types of folk art, including more than 400 examples of North Carolina pottery.

Formed, Fired and Finished opens May 14 and will be exhibited for a year at the Museum of the Albemarle (www.museumofthealbemarle.com), located at 501 South Water Street in Elizabeth City, N.C. The northeastern regional branch of the North Carolina Museum of History, the museum interprets the history of 13 counties in northeastern North Carolina, considered by many to be the birthplace of English America. Admission is free. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. For information, call (252) 335-1453.

About Elizabeth City

Elizabeth City is located in Northeastern North Carolina on the Intracoastal Waterway, halfway between Virginia Beach and the Outer Banks. Known as the “Harbor of Hospitality®,” the city has six National Register Historic Districts and is home to the Museum of the Albemarle, The Center at Arts of the Albemarle, Elizabeth City State University Planetarium, Port Discover Hands-on Science Center and the nation’s largest U.S. Coast Guard base. Nature-based travelers are drawn to the area’s proximity to Dismal Swamp and the abundance of outdoor recreational offerings. For additional information, call Elizabeth City Area Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-866-ECity-4U (1-866-324-8948) or (252) 335-5330 or visit www.DiscoverElizabethCity.com. For up-to-date info on area happenings and events, visit www.ElizabethCityHASit.com

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