CORAL GABLES, FL (September 23, 2013) – After more than 40 years of dedicated service, Brian Dursum, director and chief curator of the Lowe Art Museum in the University of Miami’s College of Arts and Sciences, announced that he will retire in August 2014.

“It has been my great privilege to serve the University of Miami community and to help shape this important cultural institution in our city,” said Dursum, who served as the Lowe's director and chief curator for 23 years. The Lowe is Miami’s first and most comprehensive art museum, with a collection spanning more than 5,000 years of world art history.

As director, Dursum, a specialist in Asian art, has served as both the museum’s administrator and its chief curator. He will curate one more exhibition as director—China’s Last Empire: The Art and Culture of The Qing Dynasty, which will open in June 2014. Dursum will step down as director effective August 29, 2014, but will continue to teach Asian art classes through the Department of Art and Art History and research the Lowe’s Asian art collection.

“Brian ushered in a new era at the Lowe, making it a critical part of the academic experience for UM students and faculty, highlighting its holdings to the region and to the world, and ensuring the museum’s legacy for years to come,” said Dean Leonidas G. Bachas, of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Dursum was appointed director of the museum in 1990 after serving as its registrar since 1982. Under his leadership, the Lowe doubled in physical size, its collection expanded to more than 19,000 works of art, and its endowment grew exponentially.

Dursum’s management of the permanent collection, which has strengths in Renaissance and Baroque, 17th through 21st century American and European, Ancient and Native American, African, Oceanic, and Asian art, has cemented the Lowe’s reputation as one of the most important museums in the Southeast. But, education has always been his key focus, he said.

In recent years, UM anthropologists have studied its ancient artifacts, undergraduates have gained a first-hand view of art history, faculty and students have collaborated to curate and manage exhibitions, and medical students have honed their skills of observation using the Lowe’s collection. “We are a museum for the public, but we have
an important academic mission,” Dursum said. “It has always been my goal that the Lowe would be used as a resource for teaching and research.”

A search committee comprised of faculty from across the University, a student, senior leadership and others will be formed to find Dursum’s successor. “Brian has been an outstanding director, making the Lowe a vital part of the university and the community, and we are committed to finding a new director who can continue to drive the Lowe forward.” said Perri Lee Roberts, search committee chair and professor in the Department of Art & Art History.

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