

Our Founding “Mothers”

Reviewing our amazing history, we realize how much is owed to the extremely innovative and committed women we call our Founding “Mothers.” We stand on their shoulders for the success we have today.

The seed for PAA was first planted in August of 1954 at a Pasadena Art Museum Board of Trustees meeting. It was conceived and proposed by a group of women from the Junior League of Pasadena and was described as “an auxiliary of twenty-five to fifty young(ish), energetic and efficient women” who would attract new members and raise money for the museum. In November of 1954 it won Board approval. The three key leaders and founding members were Estelle Schlueter (she was part of the Junior League), Elizabeth (Liz) Hanson, and Eudora (Eudie) Moore.

One must realize that none of these women had first names in those days, but went by Mrs. Francis Schlueter, Mrs. Paul Hanson and Mrs. Anson Moore. The first meeting was held in January of 1955 and by the February meeting a name for the group had been selected: Art Alliance . . . as suggested by Mrs. Arthur L. Crowe (Mary).

By way of background, the museum gained much prominence in 1953 when it was entrusted with the Galka Scheyer collection of 450 works by the Blue Four (Feininger, Kandinsky, Klee and Jawlensky) and other modern artists plus over 800 documents. The collection was actually given to the Pasadena Art Institute which changed its name to the Pasadena Art Museum in April of 1954.

Ann Barrett’s first PAA volunteer job was to catalog Galka Scheyer’s papers and she recalls that Galka actually left it to “The people of California” which meant it could go to any museum that would accept it and even though the Art Institute was an unlikely destination, it landed

there and changed the art scene not only in Pasadena, but all over Los Angeles. But the Institute really wasn't prepared to finance, store, catalog, and exhibit such a large collection and it sought various support groups to take up the staffing and financial slack. The Pasadena Art Museum was to be the PERFECT venue for some NEW energy and thinking ... and FUN ... definitely the place for the women of the Art Alliance.

Our "First Ten Gems" (current members who joined between 1955 and 1965) will be honored this entire year and they are: Carol Bramhall, Betye Burton, Barbara Campbell, Carolyn Farris, Mary Gerke, Adelaide Hixon, Liz Morton, Peg Palmer, Peggy Phelps, Katie Schwarzenbach and Mibs Wolfe.