

Annenbergs give \$25 million for Bruton Heights School Educational Center

Ambassador Walter Annenberg and his wife, Lee, through The Annenberg Foundation, have committed \$25 million toward the Bruton Heights School Educational Center. The gift was announced today. The center will include the new John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, the DeWitt Wallace Collections and Conservation Building and the refurbished Bruton Heights School.

In acknowledging the gift, Colonial Williamsburg Chairman Charles R. Longworth said "The Annenbergs' ambitious endeavors, high ideals and timeless values are inspirations to all who treasure what Colonial Williamsburg strives to teach, the spirit of patriotism, of noble purpose and of devotion to the welfare of our fellow man. This magnificent gift enhances a long and generous partnership between Colonial Williamsburg and Walter and Lee Annenberg."

Approximately \$12 million of the gift will be used toward the \$33 million construction costs of the educational center. The remaining funds will help endow the operating costs of the facilities.

"This landmark gift is a tribute to each and every employee who makes Colonial Williamsburg the special place it is," said President Robert C. Wilburn. "Many times the Annenbergs have spoken publicly of their deep appreciation for the Colonial Williamsburg experience and its impact on Americans. It is employees working together as a whole -- office staff, researchers, interpreters, hotel and restaurant workers, and many more -- who shape this experience. Bruton Heights will be a tremendous boost to the overall effort."

The Annenbergs have supported Colonial Williamsburg since 1960. Their recent gifts to the institution include \$1 million in 1983 for the renovation of Colonial Williamsburg's Visitor Center and \$5 million in 1989, also for the Bruton Heights School Educational Center.

The couple recently received Colonial Williamsburg's highest honor, the Colonial Williamsburg Churchill Bell, when they were recognized for their generous philanthropy and public service. The Colonial Williamsburg Churchill Bell recalls the Williamsburg Award given to British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill by Colonial Williamsburg president Winthrop Rockefeller in 1955. Colonial Williamsburg has

previously presented the Churchill Bell to Abby and George O'Neill, longtime trustees of the Foundation. Mrs. O'Neill is the granddaughter of Colonial Williamsburg founder John D. Rockefeller Jr.

The award also has been presented to Reader's Digest CEO George V. Grune, honoring him, Reader's Digest co-founders DeWitt and Lila Wallace, and Reader's Digest employees, for several decades of generosity to Colonial Williamsburg.

Charles L. Brown, chairman emeritus of Colonial Williamsburg and a longtime friend of the Annenbergs, said "Together, Walter and Lee Annenberg have been diplomats, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, advisors to presidents, intimates of royalty, patriots and wonderful Americans. Colonial Williamsburg is indeed fortunate to be a major recipient of their beneficence."

Walter Annenberg built Triangle Publications of Philadelphia -- publishers of TV Guide, among many other holdings -- into one of America's largest media conglomerates. Mrs. Annenberg served as chief of protocol in the Department of State during the Reagan administration. Ambassador to Great Britain and Ireland from 1968 to 1974, Mr. Annenberg has often communicated his affinity for the inspirational value of Colonial Williamsburg.

"Americans have a right to be proud of Colonial Williamsburg because it has the capacity to have great impact on the citizens of our country," he wrote in 1991. "As the years go by, I hope more Americans take the opportunity to visit this remarkable installation of greatness fully setting forth the beginnings of our country."

On another occasion he said, "The historical importance of Colonial Williamsburg must remain, and, accordingly, must be sustained as a reminder to the citizens of our country to better understand the battle that our Founding Fathers had to overcome. Colonial Williamsburg might well be described as the fountainhead of Americanism."

In 1986, President Reagan awarded ambassador Annenberg the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian decoration, citing Annenberg's "...devotion to the development of higher education and support to countless institutions."