

[www.nelson-atkins.org](http://www.nelson-atkins.org)

816.561.4000 Telephone  
816.561.4011 Facsimile

The  
Nelson-Atkins  
Museum  
of Art

4525 Oak Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Nelson-Atkins Mourns Loss of Henry Bloch**

### ***Bloch's Vision, Leadership and Commitment Integral to Museum's Success***

Kansas City, MO. April 23, 2019—The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art joins the Bloch family and Bloch Family Foundation in profound sadness with news of the death of Henry Wollman Bloch, who died peacefully, surrounded by his family, at the age of 96. The Nelson-Atkins was honored to be among the many organizations and civic efforts that benefited from Mr. Bloch's philanthropic leadership.

Mr. Bloch founded the Business Council at the Nelson-Atkins in 1985. It is the most successful Business Council of any art museum in the country.

“This is an enormous loss to the community and to the Nelson-Atkins,” said Richard C. Green, Chair of the museum's Board of Trustees. “Henry Bloch had an unfailing vision and enthusiasm that was borne of genuine gratitude. The Nelson-Atkins was truly fortunate to benefit from Henry's leadership, guidance, and passion for the arts. It is now our responsibility to reflect his wonderful example as we move into the future.”

“Henry is irreplaceable,” said Julián Zugazagoitia, Director & CEO of the Nelson-Atkins. “His leadership and dedication have been vital to the success of the Nelson-Atkins. But beyond the museum, Henry has been an outstanding citizen whose generosity and vision have had a transformative impact on Kansas City being the great city it is today. He has been a benefactor as well as a source of inspiration that continues to illuminate all that we do. We will miss him very much.”



Born July 30, 1922, Henry Bloch was the second of three sons of a middle-class family. A visionary entrepreneur and philanthropist, he co-founded H&R Block Inc. in 1955 with his brother Richard. The new firm specialized in income tax return preparation. They named the company "Block" because their family name, "Bloch," was often mispronounced and misspelled.



Bloch had a passion for the arts. He served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Nelson-Atkins from May, 2004, to April 30, 2007.

“This is a sad day. Henry has been a fundamental pillar of leadership for the Nelson-Atkins for so many years,” said Shirley Bush Helzberg, former Chair of the museum’s Board of Trustees. “His steadfast support and keen eye for sound business practices will be sorely missed. And he was a true gentleman.”

In June 2007, the museum opened the internationally acclaimed Bloch Building expansion, named in honor of Marion and Henry Bloch. And in 2010, the Blochs announced that they would donate their expansive personal collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings to the museum, which includes works from artists such as Monet, van Gogh, Cezanne, Renoir and Degas. The collection of 29 masterpieces was assembled by the Blochs over a period of more than 20 years with the guidance Marc F. Wilson, Director Emeritus of the Nelson-Atkins, and it was officially accessioned into the museum’s permanent collection in July 2015.

As part of accepting the Bloch Collection into the Nelson-Atkins collection, the museum began an \$11.7 million renovation, funded by the Marion and Henry Bloch Family Foundation. The art was integrated with the museum’s European collection and the Bloch Galleries opened in March 2017. Since opening, the Bloch Galleries have become the most popular spot in the entire Nelson-Atkins.

The result of careful research and consultation with curators and conservators from across the country, including former Nelson-Atkins Director Ralph T. Coe, the collection is an excellently balanced and maintained selection of superlative works from the seminal artists of these periods. Among the famed pieces are Manet’s *The Croquet Party*, van Gogh’s *Restaurant Rispal at Asnières*, Gauguin’s *The Willow*, and Cézanne’s *Man with a Pipe*, as well as major works by Monet, Renoir, Degas, Pissarro, Morisot, and Sisley, and modern masters Bonnard and Matisse. The scholarship of Impressionism continues to resonate at the Nelson-Atkins today because of Bloch’s dedication and steadfast support.

Mr. Bloch is survived by four children: Robert L. Bloch, Thomas M. Bloch, Mrs. Mary Jo Brown, and Mrs. Elizabeth Uhlmann, all of Kansas City; 12 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren. His wife, Marion, died in 2013.

*Photo credit of Henry Bloch: Mark McDonald*

## **The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**

The Nelson-Atkins in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America's finest art museums. The museum, which strives to be the place *where the power of art engages the spirit of community*, opens its doors free of charge to people of all backgrounds. The museum is an institution that both challenges and comforts, that both inspires and soothes, and it is a destination for inspiration, reflection and connecting with others.

The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access to its renowned collection of more than 41,000 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the region. In 2017, the Nelson-Atkins celebrates the 10-year anniversary of the Bloch Building, a critically acclaimed addition to the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building.

The Nelson-Atkins is located at 45<sup>th</sup> and Oak Streets, Kansas City, MO. Hours, beginning Memorial Day, are Monday and Wednesday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Thursday/Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. The museum is closed on Tuesday. Admission to the museum is free to everyone. For museum information, phone 816.751.1ART (1278) or visit [nelson-atkins.org](http://nelson-atkins.org).

### **For media interested in receiving further information, please contact:**

Kathleen Leighton, Manager, Media Relations and Video Production  
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art  
816.751.1321  
[kleighton@nelson-atkins.org](mailto:kleighton@nelson-atkins.org)