

Litt. D. 1994
(Bicentennial)

JOSEPH CURTIS SLOANE

It is fitting that, at the conclusion of its Bicentennial Observance, this University should recognize the individual who has surely made the single-greatest contribution to the study and appreciation of art on this campus. Arriving in 1959, Joseph Sloane became Chairman of the Department of Art and Director of the William Hayes Ackland Memorial Art Center. He held both positions for the next nineteen years. He was named Alumni Distinguished Professor in 1963. He transformed a small undergraduate art department into a major center for graduate studies in both art history and studio art. He vigorously led the movement that culminated in the construction of the Hanes Art Center: the library in that building is named in his honor. Under the guidance of his discerning eye, the collection of art gathered in the Ackland Art Museum evolved into one of the most distinguished among American university museums.

Joseph Sloane was a Lieutenant Commander in the United States Naval Reserve in the Pacific Theater during World War II. His Bachelor of Arts, Master of Fine Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees are all from Princeton University. From Princeton he went on to appointments at Rutgers University and Bryn Mawr College before moving to Chapel Hill. In 1951 his seminal book, French Painting between the Past and the Present, was published by the Princeton University Press; in 1973 it was reissued in paperback. This groundbreaking work brought art criticism to bear on major issues of art history and profoundly changed the study of French nineteenth-century painting as a result.

Joseph Sloane was an active advocate of the arts at the local, state, and national levels. He was a trustee of the North Carolina Museum of Art from 1962 to 1983 and past president of the North Carolina State Art Society. He has served as the president of the College Art Association of America and is an Honorary Life Member of the Association of Art Museum Directors. In 1993, he was given the Southeastern College Art Conference President's Award. A painting by Henri "Douanier" Rousseau was acquired in his honor by the Ackland Art Museum and another by Georgia O'Keefe was given to the North Carolina Museum of Art in his name by the North Carolina Art Society. He was presented the Thomas Jefferson Award by this University in 1976.

An erudite scholar and a gifted teacher; a gently persuasive departmental leader; an able and energetic museum director; a visionary whose goals came to fruition by steady day-to-day nurturing; and above all, a man passionately dedicated to the social and personal values of art, Joseph Sloane leaves a unique legacy of devotion and service. This University summons him here today for signal recognition with honorary Doctor of Letters degree.