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ALBANY INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES FIRST ENDOWED POSITION IN MUSEUM'S HISTORY

Transformative gift of \$1.25 million establishes the Douglas Lloyd Cohn Director of Curatorial Affairs Endowment



Left: Douglas Lloyd Cohn; right: Diane Shewchuk.
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ALBANY, NY— The Albany Institute of History & Art (AIHA) announced today a transformative gift from longtime supporter and Trustee Douglas Lloyd Cohn to establish the first endowed staff position in the museum's 235-year history. The Douglas Lloyd Cohn Director of Curatorial Affairs, held by Diane Shewchuk, will provide permanent support for the leadership, scholarship, and stewardship at the heart of the Albany Institute's curatorial program.

The establishment of AIHA's first endowed position through a combined outright and legacy gift marks

an important milestone in the museum's history and a significant investment in its long-term institutional capacity. By permanently supporting a key leadership position, the endowment will strengthen the museum's ability to care for and interpret its collections, develop exhibitions, advance original scholarship, and create meaningful opportunities for audiences to engage with the art, history, and culture of the Hudson Valley.

"This is a watershed moment for the Albany Institute," said Kayla Carlsen, Executive Director of the Albany Institute of History & Art. "Doug's generosity builds our capacity in a lasting way by investing in the people and expertise that make our work possible. We are profoundly grateful not only for this extraordinary gift, but for Doug's remarkable dedication to the Institute for nearly three decades as a Trustee, volunteer docent, donor, and steadfast advocate. Establishing our first endowed position creates a foundation that will strengthen AIHA and our curatorial work for generations to come."

Cohn's relationship with the Albany Institute began as a visitor and member in 1997, then as a lender, donor, volunteer docent, public program lecturer, and, since 2017, Trustee. Drawn initially to the depth of the museum's collections, Cohn became a collector himself, with a particular interest in artwork depicting animals, reflecting his own background as an artist and veterinarian. His first gift to the Albany Institute's collection was a group of letters exchanged between artists Dorothy P. Lathrop and Gertrude K. Lathrop. The Collections Committee was the first committee Cohn joined as a Trustee, later serving as its chair from 2020–2025, and his close relationships with the museum's curators further shaped his commitment to supporting its curatorial work.

“The Albany Institute has been an important part of my life for nearly thirty years, and I have had the privilege of seeing firsthand the knowledge, dedication, and care its staff bring to this institution,” said Doug Cohn. “I wanted this gift to support that work well into the future. It is especially meaningful to me to recognize Diane and to help ensure that the Institute continues to have the curatorial leadership necessary to care for its extraordinary collections and share them with generations to come.”

Diane Shewchuk has a collective twenty-year tenure at the Albany Institute. Her specialized expertise in textiles and local history has informed numerous exhibitions curated at AIHA, including *Your Friend, Frederic E. Church* (2026); *Enchanting Threads: The Art of Salley Mavor* (2024–2025); *The Time Capsule: What We Found Under Philip Schuyler* (2023–2024); *Tulips for Albany* (2023); *It’s a Wrap: Two Hundred Years of Outerwear* (2023); *The Schuyler Sisters and Their Circle* (2019); *Well-Dressed in Victorian Albany: 19th Century Fashion from the Albany Institute Collection* (2017–2018); among many others. A native of New York’s Capital Region, she has held positions at the Columbia County Historical Society, Clermont State Historic Site, and the John Jay Homestead State Historic Site. She holds an MA in Museum Studies from the Fashion Institute of Technology and served on the board of the Museum Association of New York for five years.

“Our collections offer an extraordinary resource for understanding the art and history of the region and the nation at large, and this endowment ensures that the scholarship, stewardship, and exhibitions that bring those collections to life will remain central to the Institute’s future. I am deeply grateful to Doug for his belief in this work and in the Albany Institute,” said Diane Shewchuk, Douglas Lloyd Cohn Director of Curatorial Affairs.

The establishment of the Douglas Lloyd Cohn Director of Curatorial Affairs Endowment reflects the Albany Institute’s commitment to building the institutional capacity necessary to steward its collections and serve its community in perpetuity. As the museum looks toward its next chapter, endowed support for staff positions provides a sustainable foundation for ambitious exhibitions, scholarship, collections stewardship, and expanded public access.

About the Albany Institute of History & Art

Founded in 1791, Albany Institute of History & Art is New York’s oldest museum, with one of the largest collections of Hudson River School paintings, more than 25,000 objects, and over one million documents that demonstrate how the region’s history and culture are integral to the nation’s founding, development, and identity. This vibrant, dynamic center in the heart of the state’s capital welcomes thousands of visitors and researchers each year from around the world.

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ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

PRESS IMAGES

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Please contact Marisa Espe Denniston, Director of Communications & Visitor Experience, at espem@albanyinstitute.org or 518-463-4478 x408 for all media-related inquiries.



Douglas Lloyd Cohn
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Diane Shewchuk
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Hudson River School landscape paintings in the
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