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## **Ground Broken and New Name Unveiled for Arts Education Center in Wichita Nearly \$18 Million Raised to Help Make Project a Reality**

(Wichita, KS) – With more than \$7 million raised through a community-wide capital campaign plus \$10.5 million in land and lead gifts donated by the Fred and Mary Koch Foundation, the Charles Koch Foundation and the Koch family, the Wichita Center for the Arts broke ground today on its new arts education center on the southwest corner of Rock Road and 13th Street. Along with the groundbreaking, the center's new name was unveiled – Mark Arts at the Mary R Koch Arts Center. The name communicates the idea of artists leaving a mark on their works in the form of a brush stroke, a stamp, a signature or a symbol. It also honors Mary Robinson Koch who was one of the center's students and benefactors.

According to Katy Dorrah, executive director of the center, Mark Arts will be a regional attraction where people can come to create and appreciate art. "Our new building and name are transformational for us," said Dorrah. "Mark Arts will be a place for everyone. It will serve the region's growing and thriving arts community and welcome people of all interests and skill levels to apply their creativity."

The new 40,000-square-foot prairie-style arts center will feature a gallery and events center that could host up to 700 people; state-of-the art technology for teaching and exhibits; art and educational spaces optimized for creative media; a culinary teaching kitchen; a sculpture garden; gallery space for national exhibits; and green space for art fairs, special events and plein air classes.

In announcing the new name, Liz Koch, honorary trustee for the center and president of the Fred and Mary Koch Foundation said Mark Arts signals a new era for the 96-year-old center. "The building and the setting will be spectacular and inspire creativity. And the name – Mark Arts – is fresh, simple and memorable," Koch said. "The word 'Mark' - an acronym for Mary R. Koch - is a tribute to my mother-in-law who had such a passion for the arts and the important role they play in our lives. We hope to inspire artists and students to make their mark in the same way Mary did throughout her life."



Today's groundbreaking puts the center about three months ahead of its plan. "We originally hoped to break ground in September but the widespread community support we've received has enabled us to start the project a few months early," Dorrah said. In February, the K.T. Weidemann Foundation announced a \$1 million challenge grant in support of the new center. The challenge grant was met with gifts from Capitol Federal® Foundation; Dwane and Velma Wallace Foundation; Maura and Bob Geist; the SPOUT Foundation; and dozens of other individuals, corporations and foundations. The capital campaign, launched in September 2015, was chaired by Bonnie Bing Honeyman and Mike Michaelis.

Karla Fazio, president of the center's board of trustees, indicated fundraising will continue in hopes of raising a total of \$20 million which will ensure completion of a walking trail and additional landscaping and parking. "This has truly been a community-wide effort with gifts of all sizes from many generous supporters. We'll continue to fundraise and have also launched a paver campaign that we hope will generate close to \$300,000."

Timeframe for completion of the new center is December 2017 with the opening slated for January 2018.

Project architect is Howard+Helmer Architecture; Dondlinger Construction is general contractor; Greteman Group developed the Mark Arts name and branding.

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