**STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY**

The Steffen Thomas Museum of Art undertook a strategic planning process in 2020, complete with a SWOT analysis, and the Board of Directors approved the revised strategic plan at the October 2021 board of directors meeting.

The Mission of the Steffen Thomas Museum of Art is to provide an opportunity to engage, to learn, and to be inspired through Steffen’s life, art, and legacy. Steffen Thomas’s philosophy of The Brotherhood of Mankind - that we are a family of universal commonalities and that arts education is integral to a vibrant and connected community - informs all we do. In Steffen's own words, “This world is too small for less than brotherhood – too dangerous for less than truth.”

Our guiding focus is to continue to use the strengths of the museum to create new opportunities and relationships while also forging ways to lessen the weaknesses and to build underlying financial and Board administration duties to guarantee that Steffen’s legacy will continue. We are committed to discovering new audiences, new sources of financial support, and novel approaches to the stewardship of all the resources entrusted to our care.

The Steffen Thomas Museum’s vision is to increase the public’s knowledge of Steffen Thomas as a master artist and his contributions to the art world through partnerships with cultural organizations, private businesses, public institutions, and international connections with German affiliations; to be the premiere single artist fine arts museum in middle Georgia collaborating with other single artist museums in the southeast.

Our strategic direction is informed by four Guiding Principles:

1. Financial stability is essential to be responsible stewards of resources
2. Operational stability will help museum focus on future and not on reaction to needs
3. Program development is a primary method for expanding the museum’s focus on Steffen’s legacy
4. Access to Steffen’s collection guarantees better collaboration and extension of Steffen’s legacy into the community

The results of a comprehensive SWOT analysis laid the groundwork for the strategic plan. The strategic analysis yielded new insights and validated long-held beliefs about the museum. The Museums Strengths include: the tremendous collection of Steffen's art in a variety of mediums (sculpture, painting, bronze, mosaic, etc.); the museum archives also provide a wealth of letters, articles, photographs, artifacts and documents that may be of interest to researchers outside of fine art. Other strengths include the variety of programming, including education programs for youth; 13,000 feet of display space; expertise of staff and board; digital reach; longstanding relationships with constituents and the confidence that comes after 20 years in operation. Finally, there is an hour-long documentary on Steffen Thomas that was completed in Fall 2021. Weaknesses included our rural location; a small membership base; and competition for slim resources among nonprofits.

A number of opportunities emerged, including our proximity to the major university and arts community in Athens, GA can lead to collaborations with adjacent communities. Our educational expertise can grow programming and events and reach new audiences and the gift shop can create a long-term marketing opportunity with on-line sales. Our expanding digital presence and the web-based Steffen Thomas Legacy Archive project offer the promise of exponential expanded opportunities to connect with an even wider audience for research, study and art appreciation. There is a sense of urgency about these opportunities, as the “threats” component of our or organizational assessment listed loss of talent; diminishing number of Steffen Thomas’ family members and associates to continue as champions and experts in the legacy of Steffen’s art; and challenges associated with board recruitment.

This analysis contributed to the differentiation of several broad objectives, each with associated goals and strategies. They include:

1. Ensure the museum's financial stability through a combination of grant-seeking, the development of Planned Giving and Major gifts programs and the expansion of inventory available in the gift shop and online to generate additional revenues.
2. Improve operational stability through leadership and communication, staff development and training, volunteer and internship recruitment and training and the design and implementation of multi-year plan for the Steffen Thomas Legacy Archive project.
3. Expand programs and exhibitions as a way to broaden our exposure, define new audiences and raise the museum’s profile locally, regionally and nationally.
4. Increase public access to the collection through publicizing our expanded online access as it continues to grow and encouraging the use of our web-based archive for academic and scholarly research.

The direction the museum needs to take for the next 5 years is to continue to use the strengths of the museum to create new opportunities and relationships while also forging ways to lessen the weaknesses and to build underlying financial and Board administration duties to guarantee that Steffen Thomas’s legacy will live on and reach future generations.

We will accomplish our 2020–2025 Strategic Goals through a combination of discovery, creativity, and focused work, informed by our stewardship of the many resources that we hold in trust. We have the duty to: care for our permanent collection through conservation, documentation, research, and access; present thoughtful and engaging exhibitions; responsibly use the financial resources provided to us; and communicate the fulfillment of our mission to key stakeholders.