

Hartley and Heather Richardson Donate \$4 Million in Support of The Leaf – Canada’s Diversity Gardens

For immediate release: Winnipeg, November 14, 2022 – The Assiniboine Park Conservancy (APC) is excited to announce a gift of \$4 million from Hartley and Heather Richardson in support of the *Imagine a Place Campaign* and The Leaf – Canada’s Diversity Gardens. Their generous support of The Leaf will be recognized with naming of the Hartley and Heather Richardson Tropical Biome.

This is the Richardsons’ second personal gift in support of the *Imagine a Place Campaign*, which was launched in 2009 to support the transformational redevelopment of Assiniboine Park and Zoo. Their first gift of \$1 million, which was recognized in the Aurora Borealis Theatre in the Zoo’s Journey to Churchill exhibit, was among the early leadership gifts in support of the campaign.

“On behalf of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Hartley and Heather Richardson for their leadership and generosity. The passion they share for Assiniboine Park is undeniable and their support of the Zoo and now The Leaf has been an inspiration to so many others,” said Margaret Redmond, President & CEO, Assiniboine Park Conservancy.

Hartley T. Richardson, Executive Chair, President & Chief Executive Officer of James Richardson & Sons, Limited, is one of Winnipeg’s most respected and influential business and community leaders. He and his wife Heather are also known for their philanthropic leadership and generous support of numerous worthy causes and projects here in Manitoba and across the country.

Mr. Richardson is also the current and founding chair of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy board of directors, having been asked by former City of Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz in 2007 to lead a newly formed organization responsible for shaping the future of Assiniboine Park and Zoo. Prior to the Conservancy’s creation, Mr. Richardson had been closely involved in other Park rejuvenation efforts including the renovation and re-opening of The Pavilion, the creation of the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, and development of the Lyric Theatre.

The redevelopment of Assiniboine Park and Zoo led by the Assiniboine Park Conservancy began in the heart of the Park with expansion of the Riley Family Duck Pond, creation of the Nature Playground and Streuber Family Children’s Garden, and opening of the Qualico Family Centre. The second phase of the redevelopment was highlighted by the modernization of the Assiniboine Park Zoo and the opening of the award-winning Journey to Churchill exhibit. In the third phase, the focus shifted from the animal kingdom to the life-sustaining world of plants and nature with The Leaf – Canada’s Diversity Gardens.

“As a family that calls Winnipeg home, the momentous redevelopment of Assiniboine Park is an endeavour dear to our hearts; one that will contribute immeasurable social, recreational and economic value to our community,” said Mr. Richardson. “We are delighted that our family’s gift will help fulfill the vision of establishing the Park as a world-class destination to be enjoyed by present and future generations.”

The Leaf – Canada’s Diversity Gardens consists of approximately 30 acres of new public gardens and greenspace known as the Gardens at The Leaf, which opened in July 2021, and The Leaf, a magnificent new indoor horticultural attraction. The Leaf features state of the art engineering and stunning architecture designed to create a transcendent visitor experience and optimal growing conditions for thousands of trees, shrubs, and flowers flourishing in four unique indoor biomes. The Hartley and Heather Richardson Tropical Biome, the largest of The Leaf’s planted spaces, will feature lush plant material from tropical regions of the world and the tallest indoor waterfall in Canada. ***An opening date for The Leaf will be announced soon.***

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