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Date: November 1, 2005
 Contact: Michael Hopkins
 Phone: (708) 534-7090
 Fax: (708) 534-8399
 Email: m-hopkins@govst.edu

For Immediate Release

New acquisition joins Governors State University African art collection

University Park, November 1, 2005 – The Governors State University Foundation announced today that it has received a significant donation to the university's growing African Art collection.



Dr. Arthur Bourgeois examines Epa mask

The donation comes from Jerrod and Sandy Canter of Thousand Oaks, California.

The donated piece is an early 20th century Epa mask created by the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Governors State University art historian Dr. Arthur Bourgeois said the mask is of museum quality.

Carved of wood and depicting a Moslem warrior on horseback, the mask was used in Yoruba festivals that celebrated social roles within the community.

Bourgeois said there is also a historical element integrated into the carving. He said, "It represents an invading warrior, who would have been led by Ali Balogun Gamari, the Ilorin war leader of the mid-nineteenth century. The conflict it draws from was known as 'Ali's War'."

Yoruba myth attributes defeat of the Moslem invaders to their deity Osun.

"It is said that the goddess Osun weakened the jihad forces by selling them poisoned food," Bourgeois said. "That resulted in diarrhea and vomiting, which weakened the invaders so Yoruba forces could

defeat them."

The Governors State University Foundation Collection now houses approximately 400 objects from West and Central Africa.

"It's wonderful when donors as generous as the Canter's share pieces from their own collections with us," said Dr. James Britt, director the Governors State University Institutional Advancement Office. "Through their philanthropy, donors to the Foundation are offering students – future artist and historians – a chance to study important pieces like the Epa mask close up."

Britt and Bourgeois added that the university is also able to share its collection of African Art with the community and scholars from other institutions.

For information about the Governors State University Foundation Collection, contact Dr. Arthur Bourgeois at 708-534-4012.

For information about the Governors State University Foundation and how donors may make contributions to support the Governors State University mission, contact the Institutional Advancement Office at 708-534-4105.