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For Immediate Release

Kolton New Guinea Collection coming to Governors State University

University Park, June 7, 2005 – “Art and Spirit World of New Guinea: Arts and Artifacts” from the Lawrence P. Kolton Collection will be on display at Governors State University from July 7 through July 29.

It will be the first time the collection will be displayed in Illinois.

Dr. Arthur Bourgeois, professor of Art History at Governors State, said, “The New Guinea Collection of Lawrence Kolton is one of the most prominent in the Midwest.”

Bourgeois said Kolton’s Collection will join several New Guinea pieces previously donated to the university, including one 17 foot house post carved by the latmul people of the Sepik. The house post portrays mythic clan ancestors interacting with a python and crocodile.

The house post was donated to the university three years ago by John Edler of Bloomington, Indiana.

Another post, this one on loan to the university, will be erected along with the first in the university’s E-lounge adjacent to the Art Gallery.

Both house posts display scenes that might seem overtly sexual; however, Bourgeois explained, “Generative imagery, nourishing motifs and graphic renderings are customary with ancestral imagery among the latmul people. They concern life-giving forces rather than erotic titillation.”

The Kolton Collection will include additional house posts and feature a full-scale Asmat Bis ancestor pole.

Several New Guinea pieces that were donated to Governors State University’s Foundation by the Linde Family are already on display and will add to the Kolton exhibit.

Bourgeois said, “Cultural diversity is the hallmark of New Guinea’s ecologically varied environment. The island has over 700 separate languages spoken from at least eight unrelated language families. Diversity in traditional religions is reflected in the native art and imagery, which offers a glimpse into the varied cosmologies and rituals of New Guinea’s diverse societies.”

He explained that New Guinea’s decorated objects represent forces that affect human life and play a key role in native ritual and religious thought.

“The work can be jarring and abstract,” he said. “But it is always dramatic, often intended to startle the wits out of an enemy or merely to tease young children in representation of a clown-like spirit.”

In conjunction with this exhibition, Dr. Bourgeois will teach ART521 Art and Cultures of the South Pacific. Reference No. 304869, Spring/Summer Session, Block II (June 30-August 18), Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:30 to 10:20 p.m.

For more information, contact Dr. Arthur Bourgeois at (708) 534-4012 or email a_bourgeois@govst.edu.