

EXERCISES AT THE DEDICATION
OF THE FERGUSON FOUNTAIN
OF THE GREAT LAKES
CHICAGO, SEPTEMBER 9, 1913

With compliments

↳ Mrs. Maple West

W. J. Phenix

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**DEDICATION OF
THE FERGUSON FOUNTAIN OF
THE GREAT LAKES**

**CHICAGO
SEPTEMBER 9, 1913**

**BENJAMIN F. FERGUSON, DONOR
LORADO TAFT, SCULPTOR**

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FUND, 1913-14

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INTRODUCTORY



Benjamin D. Ferguson

INTRODUCTORY

Benjamin Franklin Ferguson, an old and respected business man of Chicago, died April 10, 1905. By his will, after providing certain small bequests to relatives, he committed to the Northern Trust Company, a corporation existing by virtue of the laws of the State of Illinois, all his estate, real, personal, and mixed, in trust, for certain uses and purposes described as follows:

The Trustee is to reduce all of the estate (except a certain piece of real estate bequeathed to a relative) to first-class mortgages and bonds. If the estate falls below one million dollars, the income is to be accumulated to that amount; provided that certain annuities to relatives and cemetery associations (amounting to seven thousand three hundred dollars annually) shall in any case be regularly paid. Four other annuities of one thousand dollars each to public institutions, one of them the Art Institute, are provided, when the estate reaches one million dollars.

The Trustee, after accumulating the estate to one million dollars and setting aside

the above annuities and the Trustee's compensation not exceeding one-half of one per cent, shall pay the entire net income annually or oftener "to the Art Institute of Chicago, to be known as the B. F. Ferguson Fund, and entirely and exclusively expended by it under the direction of its Board of Trustees in the erection and maintenance of enduring statuary and monuments, in the whole or in part of stone, granite or bronze, in the parks, along the boulevards or in other public places, within the city of Chicago, Illinois, commemorating worthy men or women of America or important events of American history. The plans or designs for such statuary or monuments and the location of the same shall be determined by the Board of Trustees of such Institute."

THE B. F. FERGUSON FUND

The Trustees of the Art Institute of Chicago are Trustees of the income of the Ferguson sculpture fund. The only completed monument thus far erected is the Ferguson Fountain of the Great Lakes, south of the Art Institute.

A monument commemorative of the admission of Illinois to the Union in 1818, by

Henry Bacon, architect, to be erected on the West Side, is under consideration.

Mr. Lorado Taft has been commissioned to prepare full-size models of his proposed Fountain of Time to be erected upon the Midway. Mr. Taft has been authorized at a fixed price to model the fountain in plaster, ready to be cut in marble, the preparatory models to be completed within five years. There is an accumulation of the fund now in the hands of the Trustees, more than sufficient for all obligations incurred. The Trustees, therefore, are not precluded from undertaking other works during the coming years.

The B. F. Ferguson Fund at present exceeds a million dollars. It is subject to certain charges for annuities, taxes, and cost of administration, and the annual income applicable to sculpture is somewhat less than thirty thousand dollars.

BIOGRAPHICAL

BIOGRAPHICAL

Benjamin Franklin Ferguson was born at Columbia, Pa., in 1839, and was educated in the public schools there, finishing with a course in the Millersville Normal School. At the age of seventeen he went into his father's lumber yard at Columbia, and continued there three years, when he went to New York, and was engaged for a time in an auctioneering business with Robinson, Scott & Co. In 1861 he joined the Union Army, and was stationed at Alexandria, Va., in charge of the hay department of that section. It does not appear that he was an enlisted soldier; he may have been connected with the Quartermaster's department. In 1865 he came to Chicago, and again engaged in the lumber business, in the employ of the late Jesse Spalding. Later he became the Chicago manager of R. Schulenberg of St. Louis in a similar business. In 1867 he went into business for himself, and was connected successively with the firms of E. Little & Co., Ferguson & Auten, and the South Branch Lumber Company. In this last company Mr. Ferguson was associated

with Jacob and Francis Beidler, and the business, with large yards at Chicago and at Tonawanda, N. Y., became very flourishing and extensive. Mr. Ferguson extended his activities to the southern part of the country, and was President of the Santee River Cypress Lumber Company in South Carolina. He was a plain business man, self-reliant and especially distinguished for his skill in buying.

In 1866 he was married to Myra Finney of Cedar River, Michigan, who died about 1898. There were no children of the marriage.

During the last ten or twelve years of his life, from about 1893, Mr. Ferguson partly withdrew himself from the cares of business, and sought recreation in travel in the United States and abroad. He had a cottage at Buzzard's Bay, Mass., near Wareham, and it is said that he spent there his happiest days, cruising on the bay, reading in his library, or walking with his dogs. He was a contributor in a quiet way to the charities of the city, and he was a subscriber to the statue of Washington, which stands at the Grand Boulevard entrance to Washington Park. He died in Chicago, April 10, 1905.

It is said that when traveling in Europe Mr. Ferguson was much impressed with the decoration of foreign cities with statues and monuments, and upon his return to Chicago was much impressed with the destitution of similar adornments here.

EXERCISES OF DEDICATION



THE FERGUSON FOUNTAIN OF THE GREAT LAKES

EXERCISES OF DEDICATION OF THE
FERGUSON FOUNTAIN OF THE
GREAT LAKES

The dedication of the Ferguson Fountain took place on Tuesday, September 9, 1913, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The day was beautiful. A thousand chairs were set in the open air south of the Art Institute facing the fountain, and a low platform was provided for the speakers. An audience made up of Trustees and Members of the Art Institute, friends of Mr. Ferguson and of the sculptor, and other interested spectators, overflowed the seats, and presented, with the moving throngs on Michigan Avenue and the crowded windows of the neighboring buildings, a lively and inspiring spectacle. The exercises were opened by prayer by Dr. F. W. Gunsaulus, after which the programme was as follows:

MUSIC by the Chicago Band

William Weil, Conductor

Coronation March from "The Prophet"

Meyerbeer

Overture—"Triumph"..... *Suppe*

ADDRESS BY THE SCULPTOR, MR. LORADO TAFT
MUSIC

Fanfare from "Parsival".....*Wagner*

THE PRESENTATION OF THE FOUNTAIN

Mr. Charles L. Hutchinson, President of
the Board of Trustees of the Art Institute
of Chicago

THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE FOUNTAIN

Mr. John Barton Payne, President of the
Board of South Park Commissioners

INTRODUCTION OF WATER TO THE FOUNTAIN
MUSIC

Hallelujah Chorus from "The Messiah"
..... *Handel*
"The Star Spangled Banner."

The full recognition of the sculptor was a pleasant and rather unusual feature of the occasion. In his address Mr. Taft said that the personification of the Great Lakes in sculpture was suggested by D. H. Burnham, the architect. Mr. Hutchinson called attention to the appropriateness of this subject as a memorial of Mr. Ferguson, since the great lakes were the scene of much of his business activity. Judge Payne pointed out the necessity of material prosperity among citizens like Mr. Ferguson as the basis of great

works of art. At the pressure of a button by the little daughter of the sculptor, the water flowed in the fountain, pouring from shell to shell held by the hands of the young female draped figures representing the lakes. On the great granite block back of the group is a bas-relief portrait of Mr. Ferguson in bronze between two bronze panels of laurel branches, with the following inscription:

“Benjamin Franklin Ferguson bequeathed in trust to the Trustees of the Art Institute of Chicago a fund of one million dollars to be known as the B. F. Ferguson Monument Fund. The income derived from the fund must be used for the erection and maintenance of enduring statuary and monuments in the parks, along the boulevards, or in other public places within the city of Chicago commemorating worthy men or women of America or important events of her history. Anno Domini MCMXIII.”



THE FERGUSON FOUNTAIN OF THE GREAT LAKES
Central Group

ADDRESS OF LORADO TAFT
SCULPTOR OF THE
FERGUSON FOUNTAIN

ADDRESS OF
LORADO TAFT

Mr. Taft spoke as follows:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I have been asked to say a few words on the origin of this fountain, but before doing so I wish to acknowledge here my indebtedness not only to the Trustees of the Ferguson fund, who have given me my opportunity, but to my long-time friend and co-laborer, Jules Berchem, the founder, who makes as good bronze castings right here in Chicago as you can find in Paris or Munich; to the architects, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, who have aided me so much, and especially their representative, Mr. Puckey, indefatigable and omniscient in detail; and finally, but never to be forgotten, my good friends of the Municipal Art League who kept me encouraged through so many wistful years, assuring me that Chicago should have the Fountain of the Great Lakes, if they had to beg the money on the street corners.

It happened in this way: Almost twenty years ago—I remember it was soon after the World's Fair—I was on my way, one

evening, to Evanston, and chanced to sit beside Mr. Burnham. We were talking of the triumphs of that most beautiful of all expositions, and Mr. Burnham criticised gently the lack of initiative of our sculptors, remarking that he was sorry that none of us had thought to make a fountain personifying the Great Lakes. I recognized at once the beauty of the suggestion and felt appropriately ashamed that none of us should have thought of it. Later I made the sketch which has developed in the course of years into the group before you.

There was a long dreary period after the World's Fair, a hopeless eternity of depression and longing illumined only now and then by the ghoulish hope of a death-mask of a prominent citizen and a possible bust. It came over me gradually that the coy attitude of our artists, like a girl waiting to be proposed to, was not a success. That while our public needed sculpture, it did not know it and never would guess it unless someone showed it what it wanted! It was high time to visualize some of those pent-up emotions. But sculpture is an expensive craft, like architecture in that respect, and its most beautiful dreams are impotent

unless you can externalize them. By good fortune I chanced to have at the same moment here in the Art Institute a large class of young people eager for something to do. We began to devise subjects for their united efforts. One year we did the notorious Nymph Fountain, which "astonished the world" upon this very spot. The next year, I think it was, five of my young sculptors made from a sketch of mine the first model of the "Great Lakes." They were less than life size, they were not very good and being made separately they did not fit together very well. But the people liked the idea and I was encouraged to do them again. I did so, this time doing the work entirely myself, though at intervals between lecture trips, and writing, and teaching, and "death-masquerading." It was a rather desperate time, but there was a *leit motif* of hope running through those days and months. When at last the group was finished and exhibited, it found friends, and some never ceased to work for it until the order was assured. This first model was made in my little studio in the Fine Arts Building, a space but little wider than the group, so that I never saw the ends of the composition from any dis-

tance. Upon receiving the definite order from the Ferguson Committee I made the group all over again, enlarging the figures from seven and one-half feet to ten feet.

The *motif* of the group is not profound. I have sometimes wondered if it were not too obvious. "Lake Superior" on high and "Lake Michigan" at the side both empty into the basin of "Lake Huron," who sends the waters on to "Lake Erie" whence "Lake Ontario" receives them. As they escape from her basin and hasten into the unknown, she reaches wistfully after them as though questioning whether she has been neglectful of her charge. The exigencies of placing have made her reach toward Saint Louis instead of the Saint Lawrence, but you are requested to overlook this solecism.

Some have thought that my personifications of the Lakes are, or should be Indians. Naturally the idea suggested itself to me, but was never seriously entertained, since the Indian type of womanhood is hardly our ideal, while a classic Diana in moccasins and feathers, a prettified, characterless Indian, is no longer acceptable in art. Back of this however, is the feeling that these creatures should be of no time nor race. They are

the Danaides of the new world whose immemorial task was solaced for a moment by the canoes and camp fires of the red-skins.

But we are gathered here for another purpose. We come to do honor to a good man, a man of imagination and vision. I never met Mr. Ferguson, but I wish that I had. I remember what a thrill I felt when the significance of his unprecedented benefaction first dawned upon me. I felt that I should have known him. I wanted to thank him personally in the name of all Chicago, the Chicago of to-day and of the many to-morrows. And I would have thanked him with still greater emotion in the name of Chicago's new school of sculptors, which this bequest makes possible, the group of men and women who will bring a fair fame to our city as the direct result of this gift.

I mentioned this desire to a friend, who remarked dryly that perhaps it was well that I had not met Mr. Ferguson: if he had heard my wild talk he might have changed his will and left everything to an asylum or library. But whether or no he foresaw the workers as well as the work; whether the sculptors and architects entered into his consciousness, this remains to me the highest cause of en-

thusiasm and gratitude, that artists are growing up in our midst who shall win for our city recognition in the world of beauty, who shall crown our commercial life as was crowned the commercial life of Athens and Florence and Venice.

What Chicago lacks, what all our new American cities so deplorably lack is a background. Our traditions are all before us. Our homes, our streets, our lives are casual. We need something to give us a greater solidarity—to put a soul into our community—to make us love this place above all others. This Art alone can do. Jane Addams has understood it when she wrote:

“ . . . After all, what is the function of Art, but to preserve in permanent and beautiful form those emotions and solaces which cheer life and make it kindlier, more heroic and easier to comprehend; which lift the mind of the worker from the harshness and loneliness of his task, and by connecting him with what has gone before, free him from a sense of the isolation and hardship?”

Such is the value of monuments; such is the potency of this ancient, awfully permanent art of sculpture. It bears its message through the ages, reaching a hand in either

direction, binding together as it were the generations of men. On mouldering stone and corroded bronze we read the aspirations of a vanished race. In the same materials we send our greetings to myriads of souls unborn. There is elation in the thought. It is immortality.

Gentlemen, shall I confess it? I have looked upon your splendid citizenship with admiration, sometimes not untouched with envy. I have been jealous of your privilege of doing splendid things for our Chicago. Do you wonder then that it is with deep feeling that I thank you and Mr. Ferguson for permitting me to join you as a stockholder in this community, a contributor in some small way to its heritage?

ADDRESS OF PRESENTATION BY
CHARLES L. HUTCHINSON
PRESIDENT OF THE TRUSTEES
OF THE FERGUSON FUND



THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
Showing the Ferguson Fountain

ADDRESS OF
CHARLES L. HUTCHINSON

Mr. Hutchinson spoke as follows:

We are here to dedicate the Ferguson Fountain of the Great Lakes, and to present it in the name of B. F. Ferguson to the citizens of Chicago. It is an important event in the artistic development of our city. It is also a notable event in our civic life, for the noble example set by Mr. Ferguson ranks with the generosity of his benefaction. We see before us the first tangible illustration of the wisdom of a loyal and devoted citizen.

This is but one of many monuments which will in time be erected and add greatly to the beauty of our city. They will give pleasure and inspiration to thousands of our fellow citizens by recalling to memory great Americans and events, notable in the history of our country. Think of all that will be accomplished in the course of a hundred years through the generosity of Mr. Ferguson. It is difficult to conceive of the glory of it all, made possible by his farsighted benevolence.

Mr. Ferguson came to Chicago at the close of the Civil War, and devoted himself to

business. Its pursuits led him to and fro upon the Great Lakes. He was well known in all their lumber ports, and where he was known he was always held in high esteem. He spent many years of his life in traversing the waters of Lake Superior, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. It is therefore highly appropriate that the first monument to be erected from the proceeds of the B. F. Ferguson Monument Fund, should be this Fountain of the Great Lakes. It is gratifying to the Trustees of The Art Institute to have one of Mr. Ferguson's intimate friends write that "no better selection could have been made to commemorate the activities of the donor, in his chosen business, the lumber trade. Fitting it is that this field of his operation should be given expression in so unique a manner." The trustees chosen by Mr. Ferguson, however, claim no credit for foresight in the matter, since the selection of the Fountain was one of those happy circumstances or unexpected coincidences, so appropriate that men of faith sometimes call them special providences.

We are fortunate in having among our citizens a great artist, Mr. Lorado Taft. For several years he worked faithfully to give

adequate expression to one of his noble conceptions. The result of his thought and labor was a model of this Fountain of the Great Lakes. It was exhibited to the public just at the time when the Trustees of Mr. Ferguson were seeking a design for a monument to be erected in his memory and was selected by them without hesitation. The city is to be congratulated upon possessing an artist capable of creating this beautiful fountain, and at the same time a citizen so generous and of such great vision as to enable the artist to put his ideas into permanent form.

During his life among us, Mr. Ferguson was a modest, unassuming citizen, devoting most of his time to his business, but, as with many other business men, his thoughts were not all given to affairs of commercial life. He was a dreamer of dreams. He had visions of a City Beautiful and a strong desire to aid in the upbuilding of such a city. He saw that it was within his power to be of material service in the building of such a city here at home, and he resolved to act and to act generously. He decided to devote practically his entire estate to the purpose in his mind. It was to create a fund of at least

one million dollars, the proceeds of which should forever be devoted to the realization of his dream. At this time the value of his estate was considerably less than the desired amount, so for years he allowed it to accumulate, that in the end the sum should be adequate to do the great work he had in mind. He made a will. This will provides that "the income of this permanent Trust Fund of not less than one million dollars shall annually be paid to the Art Institute of Chicago, to be known as the B. F. Ferguson Monument Fund, and entirely and exclusively used and expended by it under the direction of its Board of Trustees in the erection and maintenance of enduring statuary and monuments in the whole or in part of stone, granite or bronze, in the parks, along the boulevards, or in other public places within the City of Chicago, Illinois, commemorating worthy men or women of America, or important events of American history. The plans or designs for such statuary or monuments and the location of the same shall be determined by the Board of Trustees of the Art Institute."

You may read this provision of his will upon the other side of this granite back-

ground where it will be placed in letters of bronze beneath the portrait of Mr. Ferguson. Future generations will read this simple declaration and looking about the city to see all that the Trustees of Mr. Ferguson have been able to accomplish through its simple provision, will wonder at the far-sighted wisdom of this man, who loved his fellowmen and sought to be of service to them—sought not only to minister to their esthetic sense, but to arouse their patriotism as well.

In this age of steam and electricity, when the affairs of the world seem to be controlled by corporations and run by machinery, we are apt to lose sight of the value of the individual. In this age of democracy the individual is as valuable and even more necessary than ever. Mr. Ferguson brings this clearly before us by his deliberate and carefully considered thought as expressed so simply in his will. The Trustees of the Art Institute feel honored by the confidence placed in them by Mr. Ferguson, and appreciate the responsibility of so great a trust. I feel sure that the people of Chicago will have no just cause for complaint of the manner in which the Trust will be administered.

At present it is the intention of the Trustees of Mr. Ferguson not to devote the proceeds of his fund to trivial works, but rather to seek to erect monuments worthy of the donor and the great city which he sought to benefit.

It is proper that the first monument to be erected from the proceeds of the Ferguson fund should be one in memory of the donor.

Judge Payne—as President of the Trustees of the Art Institute I have the honor of presenting to the South Park Commissioners, this monument, the first to be erected from the B. F. Ferguson Monument Fund, and to be known as the Ferguson Fountain of the Great Lakes, and I ask all present to stand as I pronounce the name of him whom we would honor to-day,—Benjamin Franklin Ferguson.



THE FERGUSON FOUNTAIN OF THE GREAT LAKES
Reliefs on reverse

ADDRESS OF ACCEPTANCE BY
HONORABLE JOHN BARTON PAYNE
PRESIDENT OF THE
SOUTH PARK COMMISSIONERS
OF CHICAGO

ADDRESS OF

HONORABLE JOHN BARTON PAYNE

Judge Payne spoke as follows:

In accepting this splendid monument for and on behalf of the South Park Commissioners, I speak not only for the Commissioners but for the people of the City of Chicago.

It is singularly appropriate that the first great work, the result of the splendid bequest of B. F. Ferguson, should typify the Great Lakes.

Bodies of water have always been the subject of song and story. Rome celebrated its Tiber, Florence its Arno, Paris its Seine, London its Thames.

Well may Chicago celebrate our great chain of lakes, our inland seas, Erie, Ontario, Huron, Michigan and Superior.

How wonderfully these names lend themselves to poetry, song and story, and how the rivers fade into insignificance when compared with these Great Lakes!

It is said that Chicago lacks a background; that its citizenship is affected by materialism; that we have not devoted ourselves to

the arts and to the humanities as we might have done. People who make these reflections forget that art and devotion to the humanities for their own sake are the ripe fruits of civilization. They follow that splendid materialism which is expressed in the life, the business, and the commercial success of a city like Chicago. Chicago is not alone in this respect. Every great center where art now flourishes, contains or has passed through commercial success. It is impossible to have the ripe flower of civilization—art, poetry and song—without means and leisure: leisure to think, to study, to work, and means to render this possible. Indeed, materialism is as old as man. And after all materialism represents those things which make for the creature comforts, and is objectionable only when the better things of life are smothered, and it becomes the end, not merely the means. That it is not peculiar to our own time is abundantly shown by history.

More than thirteen hundred years ago Edwin, the Saxon King of Northumbria, convened a great council to determine whether our forefathers should adopt the Christian religion. The Chief Priest of the old reli-

gion came before the assembled council and made a speech, in which among other things he said:

“I have found the old gods to be imposters,—of this I am satisfied. Look at me. I have been serving them all my life; they have done nothing for me, whereas if they had been really powerful they could not have decently done less in return for all I have done for them, than to have made my fortune. As they have never made my fortune, I am convinced that they are imposters.”

Whereupon his materialism was approved, and the Christian religion formally adopted as the religion of the country.

It is safe, therefore, to say that materialism, the desire for personal gain, for material advancement, is part and parcel of human nature. It is the soil, the mature cultivation of which produces the means, while history and time produce the background indispensable for the development of art.

You cannot have the flower and fruit without the seed, the soil and the patient labor: time and the means are indispensable.

This is happily illustrated by what we have here to-day. Lorado Taft, one of the few great sculptors of this age, has placed a crown upon the forehead of our Great Lakes.

How has he been enabled to do this? It could not have been done without the union of genius and a lifetime of study and toil necessary to prepare for such a work, and this would have been impossible without the expenditure of a large sum of money, which might never have been available but for the munificent bequest of this large-minded, far-seeing, successful business man, typical of Chicago.

This was B. F. Ferguson, a lumberman. Born in Columbia, Pennsylvania, in 1839, he was educated in the common schools, and for a brief time in a normal school; began business when seventeen years of age; was in the Civil War; in 1865 came to Chicago and became an employee in a lumber business. His natural ability and enterprise pushed him forward to success. He was associated in his business career with other enterprising Chicago business men, some of whom are now living. In 1905, after having spent thirty years in the lumber business, he died.

By his will he gave the principal part of his fortune (not a great one as fortunes are now measured) to the Trustees of the Art Institute, as its President has told you, to be devoted to the creation of monuments to

mark the lives of great men and great national events. The result, therefore, of this typical Chicago business man's life, joined with the genius of a Chicago sculptor, has given us this great monument to our Great Lakes.

Chicago materialism has taken a great step in its march toward a higher civilization.

What is thus true of Chicago was true of Florence, and of other cities now celebrated for their art. Art followed material success. This afforded means and opportunity for intellectual growth, for the development of genius.

The history of Florence affords a striking illustration and proof of this fact. Giovanni de'Medici amassed a great fortune, and by his adroitness procured the elevation of his friends to the chief offices and became virtually ruler of the Republic of Florence. His son, Cosimo, inherited this vast fortune, was not only a great banker, but a statesman, and patron of literature, and like his father practically ruled the Republic. Florence was passing through the period of materialism. Then came Lorenzo de'Medici, "The Magnificent," celebrated as a statesman, a

patron of art and letters, and under his leadership Florence obtained the position which she has since held in the world of art.

Chicago should not, therefore, decry materialism any more than she should decry her commercial supremacy, but should cultivate and mould this materialism and use the benefits which it brings until we have the ripe fruit of civilization, love for our fellow man, the humanities which teach us all that we have lived to little purpose unless we can leave the world better for our having lived in it.

There is much to be done in Chicago by men of wealth, and the greatest incentive to wise giving. Persons of large means cannot find a better illustration than B. F. Ferguson's in this behalf. If he had divided his fortune into small benefactions this splendid monument would have been impossible. The amount would not have been sufficient to accomplish a great work. Men should dispose of their fortunes so as to accomplish the largest good; to do some one thing effectively, to the end that the success which characterized their lives should continue after them in the wise disposition made of their accumulated means.

I cannot let this occasion pass without a word of the work of the Art Institute, its officers and trustees. Few realize how large a place it occupies and is entitled to occupy in the life of this city, and the splendidly effective work it accomplishes both as a museum of art and as a teacher of art. The influence of its magnificent collections and the more than three thousand students year in and year out, upon the life of Chicago, and the great Middle West, is beyond any human calculation, and Mr. Ferguson was exceedingly wise in selecting the Trustees of the Art Institute as the Trustees of his own benefaction.

I will no longer detain you, but accept with profound and grateful appreciation, this admirable work, for the South Park Commissioners, and through them for the people of Chicago.

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