MEMORIAL ART GALLERY ACQUIRES MAJOR PAINTING OF THE ERIE CANAL
Gift Honors Friend of the Gallery

In 1825, New York Governor DeWitt Clinton dedicated the Erie Canal, a marvel of engineering that had an immediate impact on westward growth. Canal boats, pulled by horses and mules on dirt towpaths, carried passengers and products, and canal-side villages like Pittsford thrived. British-born painter George Harvey (1800-78) was one of those intrepid passengers.

With help from a Rochester donor, the Memorial Art Gallery has acquired a major work that Harvey painted in 1837 as a testament to his youthful ramblings. Pittsford on the Erie Canal, which recently went on view, is a gift of the Margaret M. McDonald Memorial Fund. Established by her husband, Edward D. McDonald, the fund honors Mrs. McDonald (1924–1987) and her love of the Gallery.

The acquisition is a major coup for MAG, where Pittsford on the Erie Canal has been included in several popular exhibitions, most recently in 1976. “I think it’s the most important acquisition that I have been responsible for in my tenure as curator of American art,” says Marjorie B. Searl.

“We are most grateful to Ed McDonald for helping us acquire this significant, brilliant, indeed iconic, painting,” says director Grant Holcomb. “It’s most appropriate that it reside here in Rochester.”

About the McDonald Fund
The Margaret M. McDonald Memorial Fund was established in July 1996. "I had great admiration for the fund established by Frank Gannett as the Gannett Foundation," says Ed McDonald. "This fund, later known as The Freedom Forum, well illustrates the growth potential of a charitable fund. My wish is that the Memorial Fund will become a perpetual fund managed by generations of Margaret's and my descendants."