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World's First International Museum of Women Planned for San Francisco

75,000 square-foot Museum to Chronicle, Honor Women World-Wide

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - The world's first International Museum of Women exclusively dedicated to honoring the lives of women will be established in San Francisco, with a projected opening date of 2005. According to Elizabeth Colton, President of the Board, "The International Museum of Women will be the first world-class cultural and educational institution examining and celebrating the lives of women throughout time." The proposed 75,000 square-foot Museum will feature contemporary galleries with permanent and temporary exhibits, educational centers for children and teens, public meeting spaces, and a virtual Museum accessible worldwide on the Internet. Following a recent meeting with City Officials, Museum trustees are discussing with developers plans to establish the Museum along the San Francisco waterfront.

According to Senator Barbara Boxer, "I know the International Museum of Women will provide an exceptional source of inspiration for girls and women throughout the world, with long overdue recognition for our personal and professional achievements."

"This exceptional project will enhance the richness of San Francisco's cultural institutions," notes Colton. "I expect the Museum to be counted among the Bay Area's most treasured civic offerings- a place where our children and grandchildren will learn about and value the lives of women from every walk of life." She adds, "The critical role diverse women have played in shaping our society has been virtually omitted from textbooks and historic record. It is time for us to highlight women's struggles and achievements throughout the world and throughout the centuries, to empower girls and women, to emphasize the importance of gaining equal status for them."

The Museum is currently seeking 250 Founding Members, each of whom will donate \$1000 or more to fund the initial stages of development- from site selection to capital campaign launch. Total projected costs for Museum construction are estimated at \$37 million.

The International Museum of Women originated at the Women's Heritage Museum in 1985, a non-profit corporation founded by Jeanne Farr McDonnell. The Museum curated exhibits, secured placement of official plaques honoring California women, and collaborated on other projects with such groups as the Holocaust

Center, the National Park Service and Mills College. In response to growing support from Museum members, teachers, community leaders and government officials, in 1997 the Board of Directors began developing plans for a major museum in San Francisco.

For more information on the International Museum of Women, call (415) 775-1366 or email info@imow.org.