

# Smithsonian Legacy Society

**Gold sovereigns.** The storied history of the Smithsonian Institution all began with 105 bags of British gold sovereigns bequeathed to the United States by James Smithson, an English scientist. Smithson's visionary gift has proven to be an extraordinary legacy, and is all the more remarkable because Smithson himself had never visited America.

An Englishman and scholar of Chemistry at Oxford University, Smithson provided in his will for the establishment in America of an institution of learning for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge." In 1846, an Act of Congress formally established the Smithsonian Institution and provided for the administration of the trust, independent of the government. As a preeminent national cultural institution, the Smithsonian has grown to become the world's largest museum and research complex. Today the Smithsonian remains a public-private partnership, operating as a tax-exempt organization, and funded by a mix of Federal appropriations and gifts from private donors worldwide.

Seeded by one man's vision and perpetuated by the generosity of many, the Smithsonian has become the custodian of our national treasures, the keeper of our collective memories, and the home to our heritage. By making a gift and participating in the Smithsonian Legacy Society, you too can become part of our nation's history.

**The Legacy Society** is comprised of individuals, who, like James Smithson, share in a love of learning, a sense of wonder about the world, and a commitment to ensuring our cultural and scientific heritage is passed to future generations. By supporting the Smithsonian or any of its

museums or research initiatives through your estate or life income gift, you are joining a special group of individuals who have recognized the timeless value of the Smithsonian's work and the enduring place it has in American culture. You are ensuring that its legacy will be preserved, cherished, and nurtured.

In today's world, gifts like Smithson's of gold sovereigns are indeed rare. But there are many ways to make a gift to the Smithsonian, including life income and estate gifts, which can ultimately be beneficial to the Institution and rewarding to the donor in a variety of ways.

**Life Income Gifts** allow donors to make a gift now and receive income for their lifetimes. These gifts include charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, and pooled income fund gifts. Life income gifts also provide significant tax benefits.

**Estate Gifts** provide support to the Smithsonian after the lifetime of the donor. They include bequests by will or living trust, future gifts of retirement plan assets, and life insurance proceeds.

To become a valued honoree of the Legacy Society and the entire Smithsonian family, you simply need to notify the Smithsonian that you have included the Smithsonian in

your estate planning. In so doing, you will join those special friends who support the Smithsonian and value its unparalleled place in America's educational, scientific, and cultural history.



**Smithsonian Institution**  
Office of Planned Giving  
PO Box 37012, MRC 035  
Washington, DC 20013-7012  
Toll Free: (888) 419-7584