

## NEWSROOM

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TORGGLER**HONOREE IS A CNU BENEFACTOR AND ARTS ADVOCATE.**by [Jim Hanchett](#) | December 14, 2020*Above: Mary (left) and George Torggler**Read time: about 2 min*

Christopher Newport University will name its new building for the visual arts the Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center.

[The Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center](#)) is under construction and will open in 2021. A formal dedication and naming ceremony will be held on campus in the spring.

Mary Torggler and her husband George, of Maryland and Florida, are longtime supporters of arts and education programs at Christopher Newport. Through their generosity, the Torgglers aspire to create unique opportunities for artists in both the performing and visual arts to flourish. Their support already makes possible the university's renowned Torggler Vocal Institute, and they endowed the George and Mary Torggler Professorship of Music, held by Dr. Mark Reimer. Their son, Hunter Torggler, graduated from Christopher Newport in 2014 with a degree in music.

"George and Mary Torggler are ardent and powerful advocates for the arts at Christopher Newport and across the country," said President Paul Tribble. "It is fitting that Mary Torggler's legacy will be associated with a building that brings color and creativity to our campus and contributes powerfully to the cultural and economic success of our community and commonwealth."

This \$60 million-dollar state-funded 83,000-square-foot facility will facilitate extraordinary encounters with the visual arts. The Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center features a stunning façade of cascading glass domes, symbolizing Christopher Newport's bold vision for the role art plays in the life of our university, our community and commonwealth. The center will house the [Department of Fine Arts and Art History](#) and boasts a magnificent main gallery for major exhibitions; a 150-seat auditorium; a community gallery; and studio classrooms for academic as well as public art classes, workshops, and camps. The interactive Art Explorers Gallery for children, opening in 2022, will complete the facility. The Mary M. Torggler Center establishes Christopher Newport as a nexus for the arts in Virginia.

"I am honored by this recognition," Mary Torggler said. "As someone who has a fine arts degree, I feel that the arts, both the visual and performing arts, are very beneficial to the soul. They can stimulate your body, boost your energy, connect you to the past and teach you the value of preservation. They are therapeutic and can literally lift the spirits, something we can all use after this trying year."

"I can't think of a better time to introduce this new gem of a building. I'm so proud of Christopher Newport University for recognizing the importance that the arts play in the lives of our students and the community with the addition of this masterpiece."

Dedicated to the appreciation, understanding and cultivation of the visual arts, the center will present an exciting array of changing exhibitions representing diverse media and periods, as well as year-round educational programs for audiences of all ages. Whether viewing an exhibition, participating in a class, or attending a lecture or gallery talk, visitors can explore compelling ideas through the transformative lens of visual art at the Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center.

"The existence of this magnificent new building is an acknowledgement of the powerful role the visual arts play in building community by fostering cultural engagement and lifelong creativity," said Executive Director Holly Koons. "It is fitting that the center bears the name of Mary M. Torggler, an artist and collector who is deeply engaged with the visual arts in her own life. The Torggler Center will embrace beloved programs formerly offered by the Peninsula Fine Arts Center while also presenting exciting new opportunities. Adding value to the cultural landscape of the Peninsula and the commonwealth, the Mary M. Torggler Center is a true gift to the community."

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