

NEWPORT ART DEALER ELECTED TO THE RHODE ISLAND HERITAGE HALL OF FAME

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William Vareika in front of John La Farge stained glass windows he and his wife Alison donated to the McMullen Museum, Boston College.

(William Vareika Fine Arts)

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In the 30th anniversary year of the founding of his Newport, RI gallery, art dealer Bill Vareika will be inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame during a ceremony on May 6, 2017. Ironically, in 2011 Vareika accepted a posthumous Hall of Fame honor on behalf of his favorite artist, John La Farge (1835-1910).

The Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame was established in 1965 to honor, recognize, extol and publicize the achievements of Rhode Island men and women who have, in the words of the induction citation, “made significant contributions to their community, state, and/or nation.” The institution’s mission is to tell the story of Rhode Island history using the biographies of the inductees, noting their collective impact upon every phase of Rhode Island’s development. Inductees are historical and contemporary individuals from a wide range of fields including government and politics, the arts and humanities, sports, education, entertainment, religion, business and medicine.

Past inductees to the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame include the historical figures Roger Williams, Moses Brown, Oliver Hazard Perry, Richard Morris Hunt, Stanford White, Edward Bannister and HP Lovecraft and the more recent political personalities US Senators Claiborne Pell, John Chafee, John Pastore, and Jack Reed, Governor Bruce Sundlun, and the actors James Woods and Anthony Quinn.

A 1974 graduate of Boston College with a degree in Political Science, Magna Cum Laude, Vareika abandoned law school plans to move to Newport to volunteer to direct a six-year legal battle to save a historic church in Newport, RI which was decorated by John La Farge, a 19th century American artist he had discovered in his one art history course at BC. Vareika's first job after college was as a part-time custodian at the Newport Art Association, now the Newport Art Museum. In this early period, he also helped to support himself as a modest art dealer, commonly referred to as a "picker." He later took a leave of absence from graduate studies in American Civilization at Brown University in order to begin a serious career as an art dealer. His primary interest was the major historic American artists who were attracted to Newport and the Narragansett Bay region. He began by working out of his home as a private dealer, but in 1987 opened a large Bellevue Avenue Newport gallery with his wife in order to present public exhibitions that illustrated their thesis in the importance of the rich artistic heritage of the Newport region in the development of the arts in the US. He has specialized in the art of John La Farge and William Trost Richards and has probably sold more of their works than anyone in history.

Over the past 30 years, **William Vareika Fine Arts, Ltd** has grown into one of the largest and most respected galleries in the US, specializing in the purchase and sale of important 18th, 19th and early 20th century works of art. The Vareika Gallery has been recognized as "Best of RI" by *Rhode Island Monthly Magazine* and "one of the outstanding reasons to visit New England" by *Yankee Magazine*. The Arts and Business Council of Rhode Island gave the gallery the "Small Business ENCORE Award" for contributions to the arts and culture of RI, and the Newport County Chamber of Commerce also gave its "Excellence in Business Award" to the Vareika Gallery. The gallery was inducted into the prestigious National Antiques & Art Dealers Association of America, Inc. (NAADAA), the first and only RI business to be so elected.

From the very beginning, Vareika has used his gallery to raise public awareness and millions of dollars for a variety of charitable causes in the areas of the arts, education, the environment, health care, animal welfare, social services, and historic preservation. Among the many organizations that have benefitted from Vareika's charitable giving are: the Audrain Automobile Museum; Aquidneck Land Trust; Boston College; the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace & Museum; the International Yachting Restoration School and Museum of Yachting; the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center; Museum of Art, RISD; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the New Bedford Whaling Museum; Newport Historical Society; Newport Music Festival; Newport Opera House; Newport Tree Society; The Norman Bird Sanctuary; The Potter League for Animals; Preservation Society of Newport County; Redwood Library and Athenaeum; Rhode Island Council on the Humanities; Rhode Island State House Restoration Society; Salve Regina University; Save The Bay; and Trinity Repertory Theatre. Vareika has also donated dozens of artworks to museums and other charitable organizations, including: the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover; the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College; the Newport Art Museum; and Wellesley College Museum of Art.

Bill served on the board of the Newport Art Museum for twenty years and was a member of the museum's Collections and Exhibitions Committee for thirty eight years. He has also been a board member of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, the Newport Music Festival, and Save The Bay. He has also served on a number of advisory committees, including: the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center; McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College; New Bedford Whaling Museum; and Trinity Boston Preservation Trust. He is a former Vice-Chairman of the RI State Council on the Arts, having been appointed by Governor Bruce Sundlun. Governor Donald Carcieri appointed Vareika to the RI State House Restoration Society, on which he continues to serve. He is also a member of the Board of the Rhode Island State Council on the Humanities, appointed by Governor Lincoln Chafee.

Vareika is a former trustee of Historic New England, and a current member of the organization's Board of Overseers. He is also a trustee of the non-profit Newport Festivals Foundation which operates the Newport Jazz Festival and the Newport Folk Festival.

Bill and his wife Alison were honored by the environmental organization Save The Bay, with the "Partners in Philanthropy Award" presented by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center also honored them with the "Keeper of the Dream Award" for their non-profit work in the community. In 2011 Bill received a "Friend of Education" Award from the Newport Public Education Foundation. Bill was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Salve Regina University on May 15, 2011.

Bill and Alison have three children, two dogs, and live in an 1877 National Historic Register Queen Anne style home in Newport that they have been restoring for over twenty-five years, in which they display their large collection of art by living RI artists.

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About William Vareika Fine Arts

One of the largest art galleries in New England, William Vareika Fine Arts enjoys a national reputation, specializing in the purchase and sale of important 18th-, 19th-, and early 20th-century American paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints. The gallery numbers among its clients some of the leading museums, corporations, and private collectors in the United States, as well as many beginning collectors. The gallery is located in historic Newport, RI, on famous Bellevue Avenue, a few doors from the Newport Casino and the International Tennis Hall of Fame, and two blocks from the Newport Art Museum and the Redwood Library and Athenaeum. The gallery inventory includes over 500 artworks including Colonial and Federal portraits, Hudson River School Landscapes, seascapes and marines, still lifes, and works of the American Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Realists. Prices range from around US\$250 to over 100,000. All major credit cards are accepted. William Vareika Fine Arts offers art appraisal services, framing, and art conservation consultation. The gallery purchases art and also accepts artwork on consignment for sale. The

sale all of original artworks in the state of Rhode Island are exempt by law from Rhode Island sales tax assessment.
For more information contact gallery.

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