

Great Spruce Head Island  
Sunset, ME 04683  
August 6, 1984

Mrs David McAlpin  
Box 670  
Princeton, N.J. 08540

Dear Dave:

Ever since Stieglitz exhibited my first black and white photographs at An American Place in 1938, you have supported and taken an interest in my work. Because of you my first color photographs of birds were shown at the Museum of Modern Art; it was by your influence that I was invited to give a lecture and exhibit my photographs at the Princeton Art Museum; and it was through your suggestion and efforts that the Intimate Landscapes show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art took place. For these and many more kindnesses, I owe you more gratitude than I will ever adequately be able to express.

And now I must tell you something that I fear you will consider an act of great ingratitude. I have recently changed my will to leave all my photographs to Amon Carter Museum in FortWorth and not to the Princeton Art Museum. I owe you an explanation for this action.

Last summer in Maine I experienced a deterioration of my health when I suffered attacks of angina pectoris, confirmed by electrocardiograms. An angiogram performed in Albuquerque showed arteriosclerotic occlusion of three branches of the coronary arteries, but it was not considered sufficient damage to warrant surgery and I was put on a regimen of daily medication. In October I went to New York to attend the opening of an exhibition of my China pictures at the Daniel Wolf Gallery. Two nights before the show opened I became violently ill with intestinal obstructions, which I recognized because I had suffered from similar symptoms before. In the morning I was taken to the New York hospital by my agent, Timothy Seldes, and was operated on that same day. A section of my small intestine was excised and a large number of adhesions were removed. I remained hospitalized for over four weeks before returning to Santa Fe. My recovery has been satisfactory, but I have not regained my former strength and have been troubled with extensive arthritis, which has further limited my activities.

In view of this history and the fact that the Princeton Art Museum does not yet have the space and facilities for the



storage and care of a large photographic collection, and because I wanted to be assured before I died that adequate arrangements for my works according to my wishes were available, I began to inquire about other museums. I finally settled on Amon Carter, a privately funded institution that is willing and able to meet my conditions.

After coming to this decision and notifying Peter Bunnell, I received a letter from Mr. Allen Rosenbaum expressing his disappointment and suggesting that perhaps I would make a donation to the Princeton Art Museum of a group of my photographs. He included a list of my photographs at present in the museum's collection. I wrote back immediately that I would be very glad to make such a gift of 50 to 100 dye transfer prints, which I will make during the coming winter months. I know this is an inadequate substitute for my entire photographic work.

I fear that you probably will not find my reasons for making this change convincing and may be very put out with me for doing it, as was Peter, and you may consider it an ungrateful act, which in a sense I acknowledge it was since I am indeed so very much indebted to you for your support of my photography and of photography in general.

I do hope, however, that in spite of this decision, we may remain friends.

Sincerely,

Eliot Porter