

STUART W. GENTLING

14 May 2001

Molly Hipp, Director of Development
Austin Museum of Art
P.O. Box 1847
Austin, Texas 78767-1847

Dear Molly:

Theresa May, Assistant Director of the University of Texas Press at Austin has informed me that our book OF BIRDS AND TEXAS will make its debut on October 8, 2001. I have not forgotten my conversation with you and Laura Bush here in Fort Worth at the City Club luncheon. You suggested that there might be an opportunity to promote our book with a book sale and signing at the Austin Museum of Art. A percentage of the sales would go to the museum's Laura Bush Endowment Fund. If I remember correctly, Laura said that she would come to Austin for the event, if possible.

Two weeks ago I saw Joanna Hitchcock at a reception for pre-Colombian art enthusiasts in Austin. She is the Director of the UT Press. It seemed a good time to mention the idea of a book signing at the Museum for the endowment. She was enthusiastic and asked me what she could do to help. I gave her the name and telephone number of Katharine Idsal, a good friend of Laura's in San Antonio and incidently a member of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. I mentioned you though at the time I did not have your telephone number handy.

Joanna and Katharine have since discussed the project. I was somewhat surprized when Joanna told Katharine that she was not enthusiastic about making the event a fund-raiser. (Perhaps she assumed that UT Press would be asked to donate books instead of a percentage of book sales. If true, this is curious, since the UT Press sells books to dealers at 40% to 50% discount anyway. A museum sale would cost them nothing.) Raising funds for the endowment, of course, is the main reason for Mrs. Bush's involvement!

Although I have the feeling that UT Press will eventually embrace the idea - Laura has just joined the UT Press Advisory Board - we certainly could raise funds by other means. Scott and I will have our own Artists' Copies of the new book which will be specially bound, numbered and signed by Scott and me. The edition is numbered at 1,000 and will sell for \$350 per copy. Also, we have for sale about 30 copies of the original elephant folio which I have saved for just such a purpose. They currently sell for \$6,000 each. And there is a significant number of individual color plates from the folio which sell for between \$350 to \$650 each.

Molly, I have already received the proofs for the new book. All modesty aside, it is truly stunning. One of the most beautiful productions the UT Press has ever done. It measures a wonderful 10 1/2 inches by 13 1/2 inches. It will contain

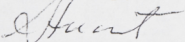
eighty color plates, a splendid text by John Graves - Texas's finest writer as well as text and commentary by Scott and me. Historian A.C. Greene (and others) wrote that our original folio was the most magnificent book in the history of Texas publishing. The new UT Press trade edition contains everything that was part of the original folio plus much more, and, like the folio, the new book is not an ornithological guide but a book of art and literature.

Perhaps I should mention that brother Scott and I were honored in 1999 by the Texas State Audubon Society as their official Centennial artists and also by the city of Fort Worth as the official artists of its Sesquicentennial. Also in 1998 the Kimbell Art Museum honored us with a exhibition of our designs for the new Bass Performance Hall. We are infact the only artists ever to have had our art displayed in all of Fort Worth's major museums.

We currently are represented by Gerald Peters Gallery of Santa Fe and New York and by Pillsbury - Peters Gallery in Dallas. Scott has just been commissioned by the White House and the Texas legislature to paint the official portrait of George Bush for the Texas capitol rotunda. If all goes well, he will be doing the official portrait for the White House as well.

Let me know whether or not you think the museum is still interested, Molly, and what I can do to help. I do believe that a book signing and print sale with Laura Bush's sponsorship, either direct or indirect, could be highly successful and would benefit us all both financially and in terms of public relations. Before we proceed, however, I need to know what the museum would like to do. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,



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