



the finest small museum in the country: A History of the Lyman Allyn Art Museum

Jackwyn Durrschmidt

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This author has dug deep in depicting the story of the Lyman Allyn Art Museum. Stories range from how the museum lost an important work of art, a nude statue in bronze, Standing Women by Gaston Lachaise, due to local patrons concerns with nudity, to the charming tale of a charismatic director who gave moonlight parties on the back lawn of the historic Deshon-Allyn mansion. The tales are set against a background of museum operations and management, and the social events the museum presented-Gala dinners and dancing in the galleries, and trips abroad.Fascinating characters abound, their personal triumphs and setbacks contribute to the biographical feel of the book and give it an exceedingly human face. Not all the personalities are museum notables. A Superior Court Judge, a Probate Court Judge, and the Connecticut State Attorney General became involved with the museum's efforts to gain independence from Connecticut College, not once but twice. The museum boldly sued the State of Connecticut over eminent domain. There is humor and honest reporting on the Lyman Allyn's stages of development from it fledgling state, through it youthful growing pains, to its mid-life crisis. This is museum history with variety and verve.

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