

## LEGACY CIRCLE PROFILE

### LEON AND JEAN ENK



Leon and Jean Enk fell in love with art—and each other—when they enrolled in a humanities class at George Williams College in 1938. Many of their first dates were stolen dinner

breaks at the Art Institute of Chicago. “I was working at a settlement house and Leon worked at the YMCA,” Jean recalled recently. “We’d meet up for dinner at the museum and take a docent tour, then we’d each go back to work.” As their enthusiasm for art grew, Jean and Leon continued to seek out docents, educators, and scholars to shed light on the works on display in any given museum—including LACMA, which they joined the very year it opened.

Jean and Leon left the harsh winters of Chicago behind in 1942, when Leon joined the Navy and was stationed in San Diego. Between the war and raising three small children, “there wasn’t a lot of time for art,” said Leon, but in 1946 the family moved to Los Angeles, where the Enks have enjoyed the city’s museums ever since. They often went to the Museum of History, Science, and Art in Exposition Park, and they frequently attended docent tours and Sunday lectures at LACMA once it opened in 1965.

Most inspiring about the Enks is not only their enjoyment of art, but more specifically of museums and the education to be found there. Even when traveling to foreign cities, the Enks made the most of each museum visit. “We’ve been to every continent, and the first stop in every city was the museum,” Jean said. “We’d find out when the docents were giving tours and we’d arrange our visits around that.” But their art education does not end at the museum. Jean explained, “We position paintings within our house and analyze the work; we just sit and look at them. You don’t tire of it. We’re

less about whether the art in our house ‘matches’—we want the picture there to look at it. When we go away we’re anxious to come home and look at our artworks. They’re like family.”

Having enjoyed LACMA for so many years—including bringing their three children, six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren here—the Enks wanted to find a way to give back. “LACMA works on bringing art to children; it provides a great foundation for their education,” Leon noted. “We were members for a long time, and we wanted to find a way to give more.” They’ve done so by establishing a LACMA Charitable Gift Annuity, which will provide important support to the museum programming they value so highly, while also ensuring a dependable income source in return. “I’m delighted with this arrangement,” Leon said. “There’s a significant tax break and a steady stream of income, part of which is tax-free—it’s a nice bonus. It’s a very satisfying approach to giving.”