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### **Michigan magic museum receives generous bequest of memorabilia**

Marshall, MI, May 2009 — The American Museum of Magic in Marshall, Michigan has recently obtained a bequest of magic memorabilia from the Jay Marshall Estate to enhance its collection of nearly a million magic-related items from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

Jay Marshall was one of modern magic's most knowledgeable and respected figures, performing at such important venues as the Ziegfeld Follies and the Palace Theater, as well as on the Ed Sullivan and Jackie Gleason television programs. His career spanned the 1930s through the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition to being honored by magicians as America's "Dean of Magicians," Marshall was also an almost compulsive collector of things magical, amassing one of the largest collections in the field.

The bequest contains a number of items relating to the life and work of Harry Houdini, including pictures, notes, and an audio recording of the great 20<sup>th</sup> century magician's voice. An 1860 letter from Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin, the French magician who legitimized theatrical magic and inspired Houdini to take to the stage, rounds out this component of the newly obtained materials.

One of the most valuable pieces from the bequest is a first edition copy of *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, a work published in 1584 aimed at disputing the existence of witches, and containing an explanation of various tricks of performance magic. Because the book was ordered to be burned by King James I, and is therefore so difficult to obtain in first edition, the Marshall copy represents a huge boon to the American Museum of Magic's collection. The bequest additions will also include a box of U.S. patents and accompanying photographs of Thurston magical illusions, and a cache of memorabilia (including an extremely rare painting) relating to the career of Alexander Hermann, one of the most famous magicians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The bulk of the Marshall collection is paper ephemera—including posters, handbills, photos, theater programs, correspondence, patents and notes—related to 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century magicians, from the little known to the famous. It will be housed with the current collections in the museum's present home—two buildings in the Historic District of Marshall, Michigan, a small town midway between Detroit and Chicago.

The American Museum of Magic and the affiliated Museum Library are built around the collection of Robert Lund, one of the world's foremost magic collectors and co-founder of the museum with his wife, Elaine. His accumulation has been called the "largest such collection open to the public in America." Robert Lund passed away in 1995, and since his wife's passing in 2006 the museum has operated governed by a board of directors as a non-profit corporation. The museum is open Monday thru Saturday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Adults \$5; Seniors/Children/Students \$3.50; Groups of 10 or more \$3.50 each), or by request (269-781-7570).

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