INTRODUCTION

Cycle of Life: Within the Power of Dreams and the Wonder of Infinity is one of the largest figurative glass-and-steel assemblages in the world. Commissioned in 2009 especially for the Knoxville Museum of Art, it is a game-changer for the KMA in a number of important ways. First, it reveals Richard’s exceptional artistic vision and insight—an aesthetically stunning masterwork that is also an engineering marvel. Cycle of Life is emblematic of the KMA’s commitment to the arts of the region and to collecting the work of contemporary artists of international repute. Thanks to our exceptional board of trustees, generous supporters, community leaders, and dedicated staff, we are able to present Richard’s monumental sculpture in a refurbished and expanded facility. The 25th Anniversary Campaign funded the comprehensive $6 million renovation of the museum and its campus, added to the operating endowment, and established a dedicated acquisition fund. We are grateful to campaign chair Stuart Worden and the hundreds of donors who have made this significant investment at this critical juncture in our history. Now the museum’s landmark Edward Larrabee Barnes building glows like new and provides a fitting setting for Richard’s magnum opus. We are profoundly grateful to Ann and Steve Bailey, whose extraordinary generosity inspired Richard to ‘dream big’ (monumentally, in this case). They have immeasurably enriched the KMA experience for our visitors, and provided a new must-see highlight amid the region’s cultural offerings.

—David Butler, Executive Director

ABOUT THE KNOXVILLE MUSEUM OF ART

The KMA celebrates the art and artists of East Tennessee, presents new art and new ideas, serves and educates diverse audiences, and enhances Knoxville’s quality of life.
Trees, birds, a man, a river, stars, and more; these are essential elements of human experience. The nature of that experience, whether poetic or scientific, about identity and mortality, is an eternal concern. Internationally recognized Knoxville artist Richard Jolley was commissioned by the Knoxville Museum of Art to create a monumental and enduring artwork that would reflect the city and the culture. He worked with the city and museum officials to create a project that would become a landmark in the city and a lasting testament to the city's cultural identity.

The centerpiece of the project, which was designed in the mid-1980s and completed in 1993, is the Cycle of Life: Within the Power of Dreams, an installation located in the lobby of the museum. This large, site-specific artwork for this project. What made the choice a bold one were the artist's natural choice for this project. What made the choice a bold one were the artist's natural choice for this project.

Richard Jolley, internationally recognized as one of today's most accomplished and respected glass artists, was born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1954. As a child, he spent every summer in Big Ridge, Tennessee, and in 1973 he began art classes at Tusculum College in Knoxville, Tennessee, studying under notable glass artist Michael Traylor. After receiving his B.A. from George Peabody College in Nashville, he went on to study under Stephen Sturgis and William Morris at the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, New York. He then continued graduate studies at North Carolina State University of Crafts, under the instruction of studio glass artist Richard Ritter.

Since establishing his studio in Knoxville in 1979, Jolley has produced master works in glass and artists' galleries throughout the United States and Australia, Europe, and Japan. In 1992 the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina, organized the first extensive exhibition of Jolley's mature works in their permanent collection.