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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NOTL Museum Capital Campaign Spotlight on Donors:  
David Murray and Elizabeth Surtees**

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**The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum breathes history and is an historical structure in its own right. But the expansion is essential – and now it’s time to make it happen.”** David Murray

“Any society that does not learn from its past, is condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past,” said David Murray, as he reflected on the reason both he and his wife, Elizabeth Surtees, have given generously - a significant six-figure donation - to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum’s Capital Expansion Campaign. “The more you know about your history, the more commitment and sense of belonging you have to your community. And the museum has that history.”

For both David and Elizabeth, that philosophy has been a mainstay of their decades-long support of the NOTL Museum, resulting in significant learning and education platforms for the Museum. Since moving to Niagara in 2001, they have created programs as diverse as the hugely popular Famous and Infamous monthly lectures, the installation of several significant brass heritage plaques around the villages that make up Niagara-on-the-Lake, as well as sponsoring the nine-part History of Niagara documentary series.

“There are so many people coming to the Niagara area,” said Elizabeth. “However, many of them are not aware of Niagara’s history. It’s all there to explore at the Museum – but as the collection continues to grow, the Museum itself must expand.”

The need for expansion is nothing new. The Niagara Historical Society was formed in 1895, and with its first president and curator, Janet Carnochan, it operated out of one room in the Niagara Courthouse – until the size of the collection demanded more space. Under the formidable Carnochan, Memorial Hall was built and completed by 1907, the first purpose-built museum in Ontario. By the 1950s it had grown to include the Niagara High School (circa 1875), and today is the home of the newly branded Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. Today it is home to more than 50,000 archives and artifacts and presents over 100 programs every year that explore Niagara-on-the-Lake’s diverse history.

David Murray, a history graduate of the Universities of Wales and later Manitoba, brought his own unique world vision to the Museum. A retired Labour Arbitration Judge, Murray’s career has taken him around the globe, from correspondent for the Thomson media chain, to his role as a seasoned arbiter for municipal, academic, professional and civil labour disputes. A critical observer of people and places, Murray also has a deep appreciation for the rare and beautiful, as seen in his antiquarian 92 volume travel book collection, The Twenty Shilling Series, published between 1901 and 1921. Now housed in Brock University’s Library and Special Collections, Murray fell in love with their stunningly preserved colour illustrations and unusual detail. While searching through one particular antiquarian book shop, Murray met another book lover, Elizabeth Surtees. Originally from Dorset, England, and a graduate of the University of London, Surtees was Manager of Administration for CJRT Radio in Toronto (better

known today as Jazz FM91). From under the 'shadow of the Toronto Gooderham Flatiron Building' their shared love of books grew into love and admiration for each other.

That shared passion resulted in David and Liz undertaking a variety of philanthropic activities with the NOTL Museum, as well as being the major private donors towards the 2016 renovation and expansion of the NOTL Public Library.

"But there's the social aspect of the Museum that we like so much," said Elizabeth. "It's a place where we feel connected to the community, and you just can't help but learn something new there."

Both David and Elizabeth have each previously served two terms as NOTL Museum board members, during the initial development of the Museum's expansion plans. "We've seen this need grow over the years, not just for the collection, but also in terms of accessibility," said David. " This Museum breathes history and is an historical structure in its own right. But the expansion is essential – and now it's time to make it happen."