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For Immediate Release

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Exhibition of Selected Paintings by W. Lester Stevens

(Conway, Mass.) An exhibition of selected, rarely seen paintings by William Lester Stevens (1888-1969) opens at the Field Memorial Library in Conway, Mass. on Thursday, June 15, with a presentation by Kevin Murphy, Senior Curator of American Art at the Williams College Museum of Art at 7:00 pm. The exhibition, part of the Town of Conway's 250th anniversary celebration, runs through Sunday, June 18.

Stevens, who lived in Conway from 1944 until the end of his life, was one of the most recognized New England landscape painters of the twentieth century. He was a member of the National Academy and recipient of over 100 national and international honors.

Born in Rockport, Mass., Stevens studied painting first with the local artist Parker Perkins, then continued his academic training at the Boston Museum's Fine Art School, where he developed his own impressionist style. After he served with the army in Europe in World War I, Stevens returned to the United States, taught in Rockport, at Boston University and at Princeton, and founded the Rockport Art Association. In the 1930s, Stevens moved with his family to Springfield, Mass. and then a decade later to Conway, where he and his wife, Angelina, bought the Lee

farmhouse on Cricket Hill. Stevens built his studio there, facing north with a majestic view of the Connecticut River Valley and Mount Monadnock.

The exhibition features 30 works of scenes in Conway and Western Mass., including oil, watercolor and acrylic paintings, and several sketches. The selected works are on loan from private collections, the Town of Conway and a few institutions. Many of them have never been presented to the public before.

Stevens' landscapes recall 19th century plein air art—going outside the studio, into nature—and Stevens was famous for painting outdoors in any weather, even on the coldest winter days. His thick application of paint and the use of sometimes unexpected colors in his winterscapes and in paintings of trees—a frequent subject—add depth and a subtle drama. Using a wide range of brushstrokes, Stevens reveals a unique impressionist technique, translating that earlier painting style into a later American idiom.

The exhibition also includes 15 works by accomplished artists of “The Lester Group,” who came to Conway this past winter and spring to paint Stevens' Cricket Hill farm and surroundings as a tribute to the influential artist. These works will be for sale by the artists.

Organized by the Conway Historical Society, the exhibition is supported by the Conway 250th Committee, the Town of Conway and the Greenfield Savings Bank.

An Exhibition of Selected Paintings by W. Lester Stevens

(Field Memorial Library, Elm & Main Sts., Conway, Mass.)

Hours: Thursday, June 15, 5-9 pm (talk and reception at 7 pm)

Friday, June 16, 5-9 pm

Saturday, June 17, 10 am to 5 pm

Sunday, June 18, 10 am to 5 pm

Come Celebrate Conway's 250th!

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