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## FOREWORD

### JAMES E. FERRELL

It has been many years since I made my first antiquity acquisition - a purchase that was so modest, I hesitate to mention it - but it demonstrates what drove my initial interest in collecting: history. It still intrigues me even though it is only a very long and robust nail, once found on Hadrian's Wall. The object now sits on a library shelf in front of volumes on Rome. Mounted on oak from "The Queen's Forest," it is a reminder of the engineering capabilities of the world's greatest empire.

I was primarily interested in relating the objects I collected to what was happening when they were made. Over the years, I collected primarily what interested me but, as time went on, curators, dealers and auctions exposed me to more exquisite pieces and I grew to appreciate their intrinsic beauty. Eventually, I realized that I might be able to assemble a truly remarkable collection, joining history with art, if I focused my efforts. As you look through the pages that follow, I hope you will agree that I have accomplished this goal.

The book begins with Hellenistic jewelry (fourth-first centuries BC) and ends with early Byzantine silver (sixth-seventh centuries AD), spanning some 1,000 years in all, with just a few outliers. Most are precious metal, sometimes encrusted with jewels. Some objects were imperial gifts, while others were the jewelry of wealthy people, and still others were the all-important liturgical objects of the early Church. Many of the objects are examples of a craftsman's handiwork, while others could easily grace the halls of a fine arts museum. Every collection, whether in a museum or in private hands, should reflect the eye of the collector - as this collection most certainly reflects mine. Not everyone will appreciate the beauty, craftsmanship or the history these pieces come from, but to those who do, I hope they are as magical to you as they are to me.

The sole purpose of this catalogue is to share my collection. Far too many private collections, for various reasons, are hidden from view. I firmly believe that all collections need to be shared, thereby improving scholarly knowledge while cultivating a passion for the appreciation and preservation of objects of antiquity. What I have collected has been saved, in some cases for 2,500 years, solely because someone loved them and cared enough to preserve them. If they are to survive another 2,500 years, they must be loved and appreciated by those who follow me, for I am only the temporary custodian.

I want to close by thanking Professor Jeffrey Spier, who has become a good friend through this process, for his impeccable research and descriptions and Bruce White for his stunning photography. These two masters have combined in a way that makes me very proud to present this book to you.