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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Olana State Historic Site Celebrates 50th Anniversary

On Monday morning, June 27, The Olana Partnership and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation will mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of Olana State Historic Site. On June 27, 1966 (also a Monday), Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller arrived by helicopter to sign the Lane-Newcombe Bill into law, which authorized the state to purchase Frederic Church's Olana, saving America's most intact and important artist's home, studio and landscape from destruction. 50 years later, representatives of the public-private partnership that preserves and interprets Olana today will be joined by elected officials and hundreds of others, including veterans of the 1964-66 campaign to save Olana, to commemorate this signal victory of the historic preservation movement in America.

When Sally Church died at Olana on August 17, 1964, the future of the remarkably intact house and estate was thrown into question. Her heirs, led by executor Charles Lark, Jr., planned to sell, the then-crumbling exotic Victorian house and its contents, including over 700 works by Olana's creator, the American landscape artist Frederic Church. The most successful Hudson River School artist, Church had created the 250-acre Olana estate over 40 years, but by the mid-1960s the Hudson River School and Victorian architecture were both little-appreciated.

The campaign to save Olana was led by David Huntington, a young art historian then teaching at Smith College, who had visited Olana years before during his graduate research. He joined forces with Sam Aldrich, Gov. Rockefeller's chief aide, to form Olana Preservation, Inc. They brought together some of the leading national figures in art and culture, including Jackie Kennedy, Philip Johnson, Jimmy Biddle, with thousands of ordinary citizens from the Hudson Valley and beyond to raise awareness of Olana and the Hudson River School. This culminated in a 14-page feature article in *LIFE Magazine* in May 1966 and in the NY State Legislature's

passage of the Lane-Newcombe Bill authorize the purchase of Olana. Today, Olana is one of the flagships of the New York State Parks system and one of the most visited historic sites in the state, with over 170,000 visitors in 2015.

Those attending the 50th Anniversary commemoration on June 27 will include Sam Aldrich and Trudy Huntington, David Huntington's widow, along with a number of other veterans of the battle to save Olana. Remarks will be given by Dr. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky, Chair of the New York State Council of Park and Ruth Pierpont, Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation. Light refreshments will be served.

To attend, kindly RSVP to mhasbrook@olana.org or call 518-828-1872 x 103.

About Olana and The Olana Partnership: Olana is the greatest masterpiece of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), the preeminent American artist of the mid-19thC and the most important artist's home, studio and designed landscape in the United States. Church designed Olana as a holistic environment integrating his advanced ideas about art, architecture, landscape design, and environmental conservation. Olana's 250-acre artist-designed landscape with a Persian-inspired house at its summit embraces unrivaled panoramic views of the Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains and, today, welcomes more than 170,000 visitors annually.

Olana State Historic Site, a historic site administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Taconic Region, is a designated National Historic Landmark and one of the most visited sites in the state. The Olana Partnership, a private not-for-profit education corporation, works cooperatively with New York State to support the restoration, conservation, and interpretation of Olana State Historic Site. 2016 will mark the 50th anniversary of this public/private partnership. To learn more about Olana and The Olana Partnership, please visit www.olana.org

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