

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Titanic: The Rise of Rosenbach*, on view through June 24**

Marking the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the ship, the Rosenbach Museum & Library tells a tale of personal loss and professional success

PHILADELPHIA (February 16, 2012) — Coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the international tragedy of the sinking of the *RMS Titanic*, the **Rosenbach Museum & Library** presents ***Titanic: The Rise of Rosenbach***, on view **through June 24**. The exhibition follows the story of book dealer Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach as he hears about the sinking of the *Titanic* and realizes that his friend and protégé, Harry Elkins Widener, has gone down with the ship. Visitors are invited to learn the details of the tragic event and how, ultimately, Dr. Rosenbach's personal loss led to professional success as he undertook a project that positioned him to become the greatest rare-books dealer of the 20th century: the creation of Harvard's Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library.

Among the 1,500 passengers who died when the *Titanic* sank beneath the waves of the Atlantic Ocean on April 15, 1912, was young Philadelphia bibliophile **Harry Elkins Widener**. A book collector whose lifelong goal was to leave his alma mater, **Harvard University**, a great library, Widener had been a friend, protégé and early client of **Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach**. At the time, Dr. Rosenbach was a rare-books dealer who was only beginning to gain notice in sales and auction houses. On that fateful day in 1912, the 27-year-old Widener and his parents were traveling back from a collecting trip to Paris when he died along with his father. Widener's mother, Eleanor Elkins Widener, knew her son had left behind a monumental task, to create a great library for Harvard, and she called upon Dr. Rosenbach to help fulfill her son's dream in his memory.

Titanic: The Rise of Rosenbach examines how Dr. Rosenbach helped Mrs. Widener create a collection worthy of her son's ambitions; how the creation of the **Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library** helped ensure the financial future of the Rosenbach Company; and how this commission set the stage for Dr. Rosenbach's great successes throughout the following decades — years in which he would help to shape many other private libraries that later became important public collections.

In addition to items from the Rosenbach Company archives, including a telegram alerting a friend to Widener's death, *Titanic: The Rise of Rosenbach* includes objects that tell other literary *Titanic* tales, such as a **Joseph Conrad** manuscript that went down with the ship, as well as thoughts from poet **Marianne Moore** and the sea-faring Conrad himself about the *Titanic* tragedy. But at its heart, the exhibition recalls a moment — real or embellished — that Dr. Rosenbach would later call “the most glorious incident in the romance of book-collecting,” one that, like so much about the *Titanic* and the Doctor himself, has passed into legend.

The first in a series of exhibitions that shine a light on the Rosenbach brothers' accomplishments as they relate to important historical events, *Titanic: The Rise of Rosenbach* is also accompanied by a conversation with the exhibition's co-curator on April 5 and a related collaborative program with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania on April 15. (See below for details.)

Schedule of Events

Titanic: The Rise of Rosenbach

Wednesday, February 15, 2012 – Sunday, June 24, 2012

Conversation with the Curator

Thursday, April 5, 2012, 6–7 p.m.

Free with museum admission

Get the inside scoop on *Titanic: The Rise of Rosenbach*. This informal presentation is led by exhibition co-curator Elizabeth E. Fuller, who will introduce viewers to key aspects of the exhibition and answer questions as you explore the collection further.

Elizabeth E. Fuller, Librarian, came to the Rosenbach Museum & Library to catalog the manuscript collections in 1986 after attending library school at the University of Chicago. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in American history and Historic Preservation from Goucher College.

Reading: The Stories of Two Titanic Passengers

Sunday, April 15, 2012, 2–3 p.m.

Free with museum admission or for Rosenbach and Historical Society of Pennsylvania Members

RSVP at 215-732-1600, ext. 123, or rsvp@rosenbach.org

On the exact anniversary of the ship's sinking, hear first-hand accounts of people experiencing — and hearing about — the sinking of the *Titanic*, a shock the world could never forget. This reading, given in collaboration with the **Historical Society of Pennsylvania**, will feature readings of materials from both institutions' collections. Unforgettable letters, telegrams and first-hand accounts tell the story of two Philadelphians on the *Titanic*'s voyage: **R. Norris Williams II** (who created an account of his experience on the ship, and later became director of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania) and Harry Elkins Widener. Both men — in very different ways — had a tremendous impact on the field of rare books and manuscripts.

Visitor Fact Sheet

Titanic: The Rise of Rosenbach

On view through June 24, 2012

Where: The Rosenbach Museum & Library
2008-2010 Delancey Place, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Hours: Tuesday: 12-5 p.m.; Wednesday & Thursday: 12-8 p.m.
Friday: 12-5 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday: 12-6 p.m.
Closed Mondays and National Holidays

Admission: Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$5 for students and free for children under 5.

Information: 215-732-1600 or visit www.rosenbach.org.

Also on View: *Inquiring Minds: Rosenbach Researchers Report Back*, through March 25, 2012
Pen to Publisher: The Life of Three Sendak Picture Books, through July 15, 2012

About the Rosenbach

The Rosenbach Museum & Library seeks to inspire curiosity, inquiry and creativity by engaging broad audiences in exhibitions, programs and research based on its remarkable and expanding collections. The museum was founded by legendary book dealer A.S.W. Rosenbach and his brother and business partner Philip. With an outstanding collection of rare books, manuscripts, furniture and art, the Rosenbach is a museum and world-renowned research library, set within two historic 1865 townhouses, that reflects an age when great collectors lived among their treasures.

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To request photos, interviews and more information, please contact:

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