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DONOR OF THE DAY | By Jennifer Maloney

Globetrotter's Goal: Extend New York's Museum Mile

Mannie Jackson, who was born in a boxcar and went on to travel the world as owner of the Harlem Globetrotters, has given \$5 million to the Museum for African Art for its new Fifth Avenue building, scheduled to open in late 2012.

The gift will fund a gallery dedicated to the "heroic leadership" of Nelson Mandela, with whom Mr. Jackson said he and his family developed a close bond through many visits to South Africa.

Mr. Jackson, who joined the museum's board of directors last year, said its mission of education and social justice is close to his heart.

"Storytelling and art moti-

vates people to learn more," he said. "It's a motivational tool to expand our horizons."

Mr. Jackson played for the Harlem Globetrotters in the 1960s and later became an executive at Honeywell Inc. He has served on the boards of five Fortune 500 companies, and in 1993 bought the Globetrotters, rebuilding the franchise from near-bankruptcy.

Traveling with the team and witnessing abject poverty around the world, he said, made him determined to give back, particularly to educational causes.

In the late 1990s, Mr. Jackson and the Globetrotters donated more than \$2 million to

the Nelson Mandela African Children's Foundation.

No longer the team's owner, Mr. Jackson still serves as its chairman.

He said he hoped the Museum for African Art's collection—showcased in a new \$100-million home on Fifth Avenue at 110th Street—would inspire all New Yorkers, especially African-American children.

"We want to rebrand Africa," said Elsie McCabe Thompson, president of the 27-year-old museum. "Africa and Africans shouldn't be seen as suffering from the disaster du jour."

The museum will occupy the first five floors of a 19-

story condominium, designed by Robert A. M. Stern, that will extend New York's Museum Mile north into Harlem.

Ms. Thompson, whose mission to build a new home for the museum has spanned more than a decade, said the museum must raise \$11 million more to complete its capital campaign.

Mr. Jackson, who is 70 years old and lives in Las Vegas, has a collection of pieces by two South African artists he met outside of Pretoria in the late 1990s.

They couldn't find buyers for their work, and what they did sell went for pennies. Mr. Jackson connected them to

brokers abroad.

"I realized that through art, people were telling their stories," he said.

Mr. Jackson said his family's charitable donations have totaled \$25 million to date, much of it going to the University of Illinois, his alma mater, and the Naismith Memorial Basketball of Fame.

He has written a memoir, scheduled to be released in January. And in 2005, he was featured in a documentary about the Globetrotters, produced by a company for which he now serves as a board member.

It was called: "The Team That Changed the World."



Mannie Jackson