



## **WALT DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM APPOINTS RICHARD BENEFIELD FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MUSEUM**

### **New Museum to Open in The Presidio in San Francisco in Fall 2009**

San Francisco, CA, August 14, 2008 – The Walt Disney Family Museum today announced the appointment of Richard Benefield as the museum's founding Executive Director. The new museum, currently under development in The Presidio of San Francisco, is scheduled to open in Fall 2009. Mr. Benefield is currently Deputy Director of the Harvard Art Museum, a position he has held since 2002.

At the Harvard Art Museum Mr. Benefield serves as chief operating officer, responsible for the day-to-day operations of Harvard's three art museums and four research centers. He also serves as chief financial officer, overseeing budgeting and finance, and codirecting the institution's fundraising. He is also playing a pivotal role in the comprehensive renovation and expansion of the museum's facilities, which is currently underway.

Prior to joining the Harvard Art Museum as Assistant Director in 1999, Mr. Benefield served as Assistant Director of the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design (1996-1999) and as Administrator of the David Winton Bell Gallery at Brown University (1988-1996). He holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the New England Conservatory of Music, a Master of Music from Baylor University, and is an accomplished organist. At Harvard he also held the position of Keeper of the D.A. Flentrop Organ in Adolphus Busch Hall (2003 to the present).

"Richard brings an enormous wealth of experience and talent to The Walt Disney Family Museum, and as an accomplished musician he has a deep understanding of the creative expression, which lies at the heart of this institution," stated Diane Disney Miller, museum co-founder. "His work at museums that are part of leading educational institutions will be a great asset in establishing this museum as a place that educates and inspires while it entertains."

"I am truly excited to be working on the launch of a new institution dedicated to an individual who has played such a seminal role in shaping the American imagination," stated Mr. Benefield. "The story of his life also tells the story of childhood in America and of the possibilities and power of the moving image that still informs our world today here in the US and around the world."

The Walt Disney Family Museum is dedicated to telling the story of the "man behind the myth," illustrating how Disney's creativity and vision has shaped childhood in America and his impact on urban planning and the technical development of the film industry. In addition to the museum, the 77,000 square-foot facility will also house the Walt Disney Family Foundation's offices and archive of photos, papers and other artifacts, which will be available for scholarly study.

The Walt Disney Family Museum is a project of the Walt Disney Family Foundation, a private, non-profit entity.

The museum will be housed in three historic buildings in the Presidio, a former military base that is now part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The museum will occupy buildings that include a barrack built in 1895 and the base's gymnasium, built in 1904, both of which are being extensively renovated by Plant Construction Company under the guidance of the architectural firm of Page & Turnbull. The exhibits and interior spaces are being designed by Rockwell Group.

Mr. Benefield will assume his new position on September 16, 2008.