

# Key figure in development of Monhegan Museum retires

By **BOB KEYES**  
Staff Writer

Robert Stahl, the longtime director of the James Fitzgerald Legacy and past associate and co-director of the Monhegan Museum of Art & History, is retiring from his volunteer leadership position with the Maine island museum. Stahl, who lives in Portland and on Monhegan, also served as museum treasurer for many years.

Stahl is founding director of the James Fitzgerald Legacy, the estate of artist James Fitzgerald that includes his house and studio on Monhegan – both built by the painter Rockwell Kent – and a trove of his artwork. The estate became part of

the Monhegan Museum in 2004. He is continuing to work on the catalog “James Fitzgerald: The Watercolors – Selections From the Catalogue Raisonné,” scheduled to be published in 2022.

“Bob’s contributions have been tremendous and I am profoundly grateful for his dedication to the museum and the Fitzgerald Legacy, and I thank him sincerely for his years of persistent service,” Edward L. Deci, president of the museum board, said in a statement.

Stahl is among the most ardent proponents of Fitzgerald, a Boston-born painter who came to Monhegan in 1924 and became part of its year-round community. Stahl



**ROBERT STAHL**

grew interested in Fitzgerald after he began visiting the island regularly in 1995. He and his wife, Carol, bought a house on the island in 2003. He organizes exhibitions in Fitzgerald’s studio and hosts studio hours, created a comprehensive online catalogue, and in 2017 published the first volume of his print catalog series, “James Fitzgerald: The Drawings and Sketches, Selections From the Catalogue Raisonné.”

In 2018, Stahl helped get the Rockwell Kent-James

Fitzgerald House and Studio included in the Historic Artists’ Homes and Studios program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In addition to his dedication to Fitzgerald, Stahl has worked to promote the legacies of Monhegan painters Lamar Dodd and Maud Briggs Knowlton. He organized a 2007 Rockwell Kent symposium on Monhegan, oversaw

the restoration of the museum’s 1852 light tower, and co-authored and edited “The Monhegan Museum: Celebrating 50 Years, 1968-2018.”

All of his work has been as a volunteer. “Bob has had an influential role in the growth and direction of this museum, and his efforts to secure the legacy of James Fitzgerald have been extraordinary,” Jennifer Pye,

director of the museum, said in a statement. “His knowledge of the life and art of James Fitzgerald is unsurpassed, and his work in this area serves as an enduring gift to all who have the good fortune to encounter Fitzgerald’s art.”

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