

Alice L. Walton



Philanthropist Alice Walton is committed to increasing access to arts, improving education, and enhancing health and well-being.

In 2005, Alice Walton founded Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art as a non-profit charitable organization for all to enjoy. Alice's interest in art began in her childhood when she discovered watercolors, as she and her mother often painted landscape scenes on family camping trips or hikes in the Ozarks. As an adult, Alice began to collect watercolor paintings, and over time, that grew into a broader interest in art history and all types of American art.

Alice gifted her art collection to form the basis of the Crystal Bridges collection, and the Walton family gifted 120-acres of land in downtown Bentonville, Arkansas as the site for the museum. Designed by renowned architect Moshe Safdie, the museum opened to the public on November 11, 2011.

Crystal Bridges' mission is to welcome all to celebrate the American spirit in a setting that unites the power of art with the beauty of nature, with no cost for admission.

The museum's art collection spans five centuries of American masterworks from early American to current day and is enhanced by temporary exhibitions. A rare Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house was preserved and relocated to the museum grounds in 2015. Crystal Bridges offers public programs including lectures, performances, classes, and teacher development opportunities. An extensive school visit program provides educational experiences for school

groups at no cost to the schools. More than five miles of walking and biking trails add to the experience of art, architecture, and nature. In 2020, Crystal Bridges opened a satellite location, the Momentary, focusing on contemporary visual and performing arts. The Momentary also welcomes all with free admission.

As one of the most visited museums in the country, Crystal Bridges launched an expansion to increase its current facilities by 50 percent, adding nearly 100,000 square feet to showcase the museum's growing art collection and provide additional space for education and program opportunities. The expansion will open in 2026.

Sharing Art Across the US

Building on Crystal Bridges' success in sharing masterworks of American art from its Arkansas location, Alice established the Art Bridges Foundation in 2017 to expand access to American art across the nation, especially in rural and small to mid-sized communities where museums often struggle.

Art Bridges provides funding and support to get art out of storage and into communities. It has its own art collection, and it also partners with museums with vast collections to share art with institutions throughout the U.S. The foundation provides funding to museums to expand their art offerings through temporary exhibitions, art collection loans, and learning/engagement programs that connect with local communities.

Creating Access for All

In 2017, Alice founded the Alice L. Walton Foundation, a non-profit philanthropic organization committed to increasing access to the arts, improving education, enhancing health, and advancing economic opportunity for all.

Alice is a member of the Walton Family Foundation, which works in three areas: improving K-12 education, protecting rivers and oceans and the communities they support, and investing in its home region of Northwest Arkansas and the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta.

Additionally, in 2017 Alice Walton spearheaded a family foundation gift that provided \$120 million to establish a School of Art at the University of Arkansas, creating the first and only accredited, collegiate school of art in the state.

Enhancing Health and Well-being

Alice's transformative experiences in the arts led to an interest in wellness, and how art, nature, and the spaces around us shape and improve our lives. In 2019, Alice established Heartland Whole Health Institute, a non-profit organization that puts a whole health approach at the center of the broader health care system to address the current health care crisis. The vision is to advocate, educate, and guide the implementation of an innovative system, rooted in whole health and the realignment of financial incentives.

In addition to the institute, the formation of the non-profit Alice L. Walton School of Medicine was announced in 2021. The school welcomed its first class of students in July, 2025, and offers a four-year, medical degree-granting program that enhances traditional medical education with the arts, humanities, and whole health principles.

The architecturally-acclaimed Heartland Whole Health Institute building, designed by Marlon Blackwell Architects, and Alice L. Walton School of Medicine building, designed by Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects, opened in 2025 on the Crystal Bridges campus. Both buildings are connected through trails with access to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

In 2024, the Alice L. Walton Foundation, Mercy, and Heartland Whole Health Institute announced a 30-year, \$700 million affiliation agreement in a joint effort to expand access to health care, reduce costs, and improve health outcomes in the Heartland. Earlier this year, the foundation announced the location for a future health care campus in Bentonville, continuing Alice's vision of transforming health care in the region and beyond.

Philanthropic Leadership

Alice's vision and philanthropic leadership has prompted numerous accolades. She is a recipient of the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art Medal, the John Cotton Dana Medal for Visionary Leadership in Museums, the Leonore and Walter Annenberg Award for Diplomacy through the Arts and the Getty Medal for contributions to the Arts and Humanities. She was recognized by TIME magazine in 2012 as one of the most influential people in the world and was inducted into the International Women's Forum Hall of Fame in 2018. In 2025, Alice was elected into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences and included in TIME100 Health and TIME100 Philanthropy.

Alice is currently on the advisory council for the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum. She has served as a member of the board of the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas and the Trustees' Council of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C

Background

Alice's career has been focused on finance, and she was an equity analyst for First Commerce Corporation, founded an investment banking firm, and served as vice chairman at Arvest Bank Group, overseeing trusts and investment activities.

Alice holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Trinity University and an honorary Doctor of Arts and Humane Letters from the University of Arkansas.

For more information, visit AliceLWaltonFoundation.org