

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOU and MANNY WALTER

Walter's International Wax Museum

New York World's Fair, 1964-65

Two Los Angeles brothers, prominent industrialists with an aircraft-components empire among their international interests, suddenly have become the world's leading wax-museum impresarios.

Lou and Manny Walter, natives of Kansas City who went to the West Coast as young men, have revived wax sculpture as an art form in the United States. They accumulated 1,000,000 paid admissions to their "Paris Spectacular" at the Seattle World's Fair to prove it.

The flurry of wax museums that has sprung up in the past two years is attributable to the success of the Walters' Seattle venture.

Their expanded International Wax Museum is a stellar attraction at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, where it is expected to be viewed by 7,000,000 persons. As the No. 1 amusement draw at Seattle, their exhibit was visited by more than 10% of the fair attendance.

For nearly 50 years this art has been virtually extinct in the United States.

(more)

Walters - add 1

At the turn of the century, wax museums were in operation throughout the eastern seaboard, later expiring from atrophy and disrepair.

Wax sculpture survived in Europe among the old masters who were descended from the mediaeval guild artists. Lou Walter became interested in the medium through one of these masters.

Walter was on a business trip when he met Tudor Procopiu, proprietor of a leading wax museum in Paris. Walter, who had been seeking diversity of enterprise for his company, was impressed by the freshness, beauty, and authenticity of the Procopiu collection, tastefully mounted against accurate background settings. The Musee Procopiu differed strikingly from the inferior exhibits Walter recalled from childhood.

Lou and Manny contracted with Procopiu to show the museum in the United States, conditional upon finding a suitable showcase. They found exhibit space in the Seattle World's Fair, which was under construction at the time.

But while the properties were en route to this country from France and Argentina, where part of the museum was on tour, Procopiu died unexpectedly, throwing the Walters into a frightening consternation.

(more)

Walters - add 2

With no knowledge of the wax-museum operation and with a \$250,000 investment to protect, they began a crash program of study in the medium, its history and technicalities. They also sent for a couple who had been Procopiu's chief assistants in Paris. Under their guidance, the Walters were able to install 20 exhibits in time for the Paris Spectacular to open.

Thus the brothers, seeking knowledge of their new venture, had an education thrust upon them in one difficult, distilled cram course. They have been learning more ever since, bolstering their education with a thousand vital details.

Lou Walter is married and has two children. Manny remains a bachelor. Each has a world of work in front of him, for the International Wax Museum at the New York World's Fair is far from their concluding effort in this field. They already have scheduled permanent installations in several cities and will proceed with these projects when the current museum is completed and operating.

Since they have become the leaders in the rebirth of this art in the United States, they intend to maintain the lead as the renaissance continues to grow.

###