

**DATE:** June 17, 2019

**A Word about Unsolicited Restoration Proposals for Stained Glass Windows**

It has come to the attention of the Connick Foundation that certain stained glass firms are offering “free” advice to churches, which promotes needless and costly re-leading of their windows. After one church received such an offer and reached out to the Foundation for guidance, a reputable stained glass restorer was consulted for a second opinion. He found not only that the unsolicited advice was erroneous, but also that the proposed work was unnecessary and seriously risked compromising the artistic and historical integrity of the window. This practice of offering unsolicited and erroneous advice, simply for self-serving commercial gain, represents a fundamental breach of professional art conservation ethics and an affront to the spirit and integrity of the Connick Studio legacy.

According to the *Guidelines for Conservation and Restoration of Stained Glass (Nuremburg, 2004)*, as adopted by the Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (CVMA), an international organization dedicated to documenting and preserving medieval stained glass:

*The intrinsic value of stained glass is equivalent to that of any other work of art or cultural heritage, therefore its conservation merits the same degree of attention and professionalism... regardless of its age or monetary worth.*

In particular, the leading and structural support matrix of a stained glass window are integral components of its artistic design and history. A fundamental aim of any conservation plan or restoration treatment should be to document and preserve these essential details. While re-leading and structural augmentation are sometimes necessary for preservation of a window, indiscriminate and needlessly radical treatment and expense must be avoided. As stated expressly in the CVMA guidelines:

*The actions undertaken as part of conservation and restoration treatments must be based on careful consideration of the history of the work, the provision of a long-term conservation strategy, and expectations of preventive conservation measures. They should not be carried out indiscriminately...*

Consistent with internationally recognized standards for art and stained glass conservation, the Connick Foundation recommends that unsolicited “free” advice and restoration proposals should be firmly and politely dismissed as counter-productive and unethical. Preservation of the Connick Studio legacy demands consultation and treatment by people of a professional caliber, who subscribe to a code of ethics such as that of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. See: [https://www.nps.gov/training/tel/Guides/HPS1022\\_AIC\\_Code\\_of\\_Ethics.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/training/tel/Guides/HPS1022_AIC_Code_of_Ethics.pdf). The Connick Foundation welcomes inquiries from churches and other custodians of historic stained glass works about the challenges of preserving and perpetuating the Connick Studio legacy, and from time to time will post new information on this topic. Currently posted on the Foundation website under Newsletter Archives, is an article in the February 1995 issue entitled “Caring for Your Stained Glass Windows,” which may also be of help.