

## **ANA ACCEPTS MINT'S FIRST STEAM PRESS**

The first steam press used by the United States Mint was transferred to the American Numismatic Association (ANA) in a special ceremony in Philadelphia on March 23.

Plans to strike gold, silver and copper medals at the Franklin Institute Science Museum in Philadelphia were postponed due to last-minute mechanical problems with the press. Gail Baker, ANA education director and project coordinator, says Joe Rust of the Gallery Mint Museum in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, will repair it there.

Once operational, the press will be shipped to the ANA Money Museum in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for display by the time the ANA Summer Seminar begins on July 1.

The medals, which were to be struck on the 164th anniversary of initial operation of the press, will be issued at a later date. Baker noted that the gold and silver medals are sold out and only the copper ones remain available at \$20 each (plus \$5 shipping and handling). Proceeds from the sale of the pieces will be used to offset the costs associated with refurbishing and moving the press.

At the ceremonies on March 23, Dennis Wint, president and chief executive officer of the Franklin Institute, formally presented the press to the ANA. The Institute, which was founded in 1824 to teach the mechanical arts and celebrate Benjamin Franklin's scientific legacy, as displayed the machine since 1927 and operated it for many years.

In accepting the press, ANA Executive Director Edward C. Rochette talked about its numismatic importance and plans to set it up in the ANA's museum.

Prior to the introduction of this steam-powered machine in 1836, the Mint produced coins on manually operated screw presses. The semi-automated lever steam press greatly sped up the minting process. However, by 1874 technology improved and the Mint discontinued its use.

The following year, George B. Soley, a Philadelphia die sinker, bought the machine to strike commemorative medals and tokens at a variety of events. After his death, Soley's widow gave the press to The Franklin Institute Science Museum, which electrified it and struck medals for visitors to its museum in Philadelphia.

Ron Landis of the Gallery Mint hand-engraved new dies for the March 23 striking ceremony, using as a guide 19th-century Mint Chief Engraver Christian Gobrecht's designs for the original medal struck on this press.

Attending the ceremony were Edward John Gobrecht Jr., a sixth-generation nephew of Christian Gobrecht, and his two sons, Edward John III and Jed A. Representing the Franklin Center were Woodrow W. Leake, vice president; Lawrence J. Fisher, vice president of operations; and John Alviti, senior numismatist. Also in attendance were Patti Jagger, ANA

governor; Robert W. Hoge, ANA Museum curator; David Pickens, U.S. Mint associate director of numismatics; and Steve Kunderwicz, Philadelphia Mint plant manager.

For more information or to order a 27mm medal in .995 fine copper, contact the ANA Education Department at 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279; telephone 719/632-2646; fax 719/634-4085; or E-mail [education@money.org](mailto:education@money.org).

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The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 28,000 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to [www.money.org](http://www.money.org).