



January 18, 2017

Mr. Gull Weaver, Deputy in Charge  
United States Bankruptcy Court  
Middle District of Florida  
Jacksonville Division  
300 North Hogan St, Suite 3-150  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

**FILED**  
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

**JAN 19 2017**

Dear Mr. Weaver,

**CLERK, U. S. BANKRUPTCY COURT  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

For the attention of: The Honourable Paul M. Glenn  
Re: RMS Titanic Inc. v. French Republic a/k/a Republic of France  
Case number: 16-02230-3G1

I am writing in my role of the President of the International Congress of Maritime Museums (ICMM), an international member organization of leading maritime museums. I am also the President and CEO of Mystic Seaport: *The Museum of America and the Sea*. I wish to alert you to the international interest in this case and to ask that you not allow any relaxation of the covenants and conditions placed on RMS Titanic with regard to the 'French Collection' of artefacts raised from the *Titanic*. These conditions, strongly supported by the maritime heritage community, were specifically created to ensure that the collection remain together and would not at any time be dispersed. Indeed, the 1993 assurances specifically stated that there would not be "any sale of any one of them nor any transaction entailing their dispersion."

As you know, the *Titanic* is a high profile shipwreck around the world. Setting a precedent by allowing the break-up of this collection would send a signal around the globe that the world's heritage can be bartered or sold in a commercial manner for personal gain. Since the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage came into force on 2 January 2009, such practices are condemned internationally. The convention specifically states that "Underwater cultural heritage shall not be commercially exploited." Additionally, the remains from the *Titanic* are now over 100 years old and thus come within the scope of the convention. The Council of American Maritime Museums (CAMM) and ICMM have both passed by-laws that are specific to proper standards regarding underwater archaeology. I enclose copies of same.

International museum opinion is that the *Titanic* collections must be held together – whether the items originated as the 'American' collection or as the 'French' collection. If you allow individual items to be sold off, it does far greater damage than merely making the collection smaller – even if just by a few items. It implies that all looting and commercial exploitation of heritage is acceptable and that the largest economies of the world can break international conventions at will.

I do hope that you are able to take account of the high level of international concern in this case as you consider your judgment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen C. White", is written over the typed name.

Stephen C. White

President, Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc. serving as President, ICMM

### **Council of American Maritime Museums**

CAMM's by-law regarding underwater archaeology

Section 3. Archaeological Standards. CAMM member institutions shall adhere to archaeological standards consistent with those of AAM/ICOM, and shall not knowingly acquire or exhibit artifacts which have been stolen, illegally exported from their country of origin, illegally salvaged or removed from commercially exploited archaeological or historic sites in recent times.

#### **Underwater Archaeology Resolutions Adopted by ICMM Barcelona, Spain 10 September 1993**

1. In regard to collecting policy, ICMM member museums should follow the provisions of the ICOM code of Professional Ethics, the ICOMOS Charter, and the UNESCO Convention.
  2. That ICMM member museums should follow sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the ICOM Code of Professional Ethics and that in particular, "each museum authority should adopt and publish a written statement of its collections policy...[and]...museum[s] should not acquire by purchase [or donation] objects...where...their recovery involved the recent unscientific or international destruction or damage of...archaeological sites..." Museums with collections from underwater archaeological sites should each adopt and publish either a written statement of their general collecting policy or a written policy relating specifically to collections from underwater archaeological sites.
  3. That ICMM member museums should follow the Council of American Maritime Museums (CAMM) policy and "...not knowingly acquire or exhibit artifacts which have been stolen, illegally exported from their country of origin, illegally salvaged, or removed from commercially exploited archaeological or historic sites" in recent times (ie. since the 1990 full Congress of ICMM).
  4. That ICMM members should report to the responsible authorities any illegal activities at underwater sites or auction or sale of artifacts from illegally excavated underwater sites in their countries.
  5. That ICMM members should recognize that artifacts from underwater sites are integral parts of archaeological assemblages, which should remain intact for research and display.
  6. That ICMM should explore ways for more member institutions to involve students from academic institutions in the study of their archaeological collections.
- In these resolutions a *commercially exploited heritage site* is one in which the primary motive for investigation is private financial gain.