

FOR RELEASE ON: Wednesday, March 9, 2005

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Photo caption: William J. Rapaport stands in front of Lucille Ball's childhood home in Celoron, New York. Bill and his wife Mary, both lifetime members of the Lucy-Desi Museum in Jamestown, are the new owners of the historic home.

LUCY'S CHILDHOOD HOME SAVED FOR MUSEUM

Jamestown, NY— Thanks to the passion and dedication of a Buffalo area couple, a local landmark has a much brighter future.

A humble house in Celoron, New York, is the childhood home of the woman whose face has been seen more often by more people than the face of anyone else who ever lived. Born in Jamestown, New York, Lucille Ball and her family moved into a small two-story house in the nearby village of Celoron when the future Queen of Comedy was eight years old.

William J. Rapaport was in Jamestown yesterday (March 8, 2005) to complete the purchase of the home by himself and his wife, Mary. "Lucy's childhood home is so important to this community and to the story of this wonderful woman. It had to be saved," Rapaport noted. He said he and his wife are planning to restore the home to the way it was in the 1920s when Lucille Ball lived there with her mother, brother, grandparents, aunt and cousin. "When the restoration is complete," Rapaport added, "we would like to make the home available for use by the Lucy-Desi Center."

Rapaport, a former resident of Jamestown, said his wife is a longtime Lucille Ball fan. The Rapaports are Lifetime Members of the Lucy-Desi Museum, and Mary Rapaport is the newest member of the board of the Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Center that manages the Museum.

Center Executive Director Ric Wyman expressed his gratitude about the Rapaports' decision. "On behalf of Lucille Ball's admirers worldwide," he said, "I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to the Rapaports for recognizing the significance of this historic house and guaranteeing that future generations will have the opportunity to see the place Lucy called 'home.'"

For information about the Lucy-Desi Museum, visit the website at www.lucy-desi.com or call (716) 484-0800 (toll-free: 1-877-LUCY-FAN). The Museum is located at 212 Pine Street in downtown Jamestown and the Gift Shop is at 300 North Main Street. Winter hours for the Lucy-Desi Museum are Saturdays 10 to 5:30, Sundays 1 to 5, and other times by appointment. The Lucy-Desi Museum Gift Shop is open 7 days a week, Monday through Saturday 10 to 5:30 and Sundays 1 to 5.

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