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NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art
Washington, D. C.

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Washington, January 3, 1948: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that a famous painting by Van Dyck, the life-size, full-length portrait of Henri II of Lorraine, Duc de Guise, had been presented to the Gallery by Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney.

"This is the first full-length portrait from Van Dyck's English period (1632-1640) that has come to the National Gallery," Mr. Finley said. "With this portrait and the thirteen paintings by Van Dyck in the Mellon and Widener Collections, the National Gallery has now probably the greatest single collection in the world of works by this distinguished Flemish artist."

"The painting given by Mr. Whitney is," according to John Walker, Chief Curator of the Gallery, "in excellent preservation and offers a remarkable display of the brilliance of Van Dyck's mature technique. The

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paint is brushed on lightly, with no reworking or piling up of strokes; everywhere the grain of the canvas is visible, giving a lively sparkle to the colors in keeping with the gay bravura of the subject. Though published and exhibited a number of times during the past fifty years as a portrait of William Villiers, Viscount Grandison, the painting represents the famous Duc de Guise (1614-1664), who was trained for an ecclesiastical career, was nominally Archbishop of Rheims at the age of fifteen, and eventually renounced all clerical preferment for a life of political and courtly intrigue. At the end of the seventeenth century the portrait seems to have belonged to one of the greatest of French collectors, François-Roger de Gaignières, who was closely connected with the Guise family and lived in their Paris residence, the Hôtel Guise. Gaignières had a watercolor copy of the portrait made for his voluminous compilation on costumes, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris."

The painting given by Mr. Whitney will be placed on exhibition immediately in Gallery 42.