



McCLUNG MUSEUM
of Natural History and Culture

QUARTERLY

Issue No. 12 | November 2018

Letter from the Director



In May of this year, I met with Interim Chancellor Wayne Davis and informed him of my intention to retire July 1, 2019. At that point, I will have been director for 29 years and will have been at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for 44 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here and I am proud to see that the museum has become a cultural and educational force within the university and community. A search firm has been engaged to lead the search with a local search committee chaired by Steve Smith, dean of the university libraries. I will provide updates on the search in later newsletters.

The Fall semester has been busy and full of programs and activities led by a dynamic and hard-working staff. The exhibition, *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights*, was an example of our mission-driven effort to present exhibitions that are educational and intellectually challenging. To enhance the visitor experience, renovation, including new lighting, will occur in the temporary gallery in November and December.

As always, thank you for your support which makes so much of what we do possible.

Jefferson Chapman, Director

On the front cover: **Calligraphic Tiles** (detail), late-16th to early-17th century, Damascus, Syria, Gift of the Siddiqi family and the Muslim community. 2018.11

Coming Together for Equality

September's family day highlighted the special exhibition, *For all the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights*. The program was a celebration of African-American culture, identity, and history through partnerships with local churches, youth groups, artists, students, and community organizers.


Our collaborators were integral to the success of the event. They contributed to the development of the program offering feedback and access to their diverse social networks in the city. With their assistance, the museum hosted a roundtable discussion about the civil rights movement in Knoxville. UT students discussed their engagement, and community members, who experienced segregation and marched on Gay Street in the 1960s, shared their stories and encouraged a new generation of activists to stay involved. Ms. Joe Valentine, the museum's outreach liaison for the event, shared, "when I heard about the nature of the exhibit, I volunteered to be a part of the planning committee because I was born and raised in east Knoxville and am old enough to remember when we could not even stand in front of the Tennessee Theatre to catch the bus."

For all the World to See explored the influence of images in America's pursuit of racial justice. The family day built upon that theme by empowering visitors to express their diverse cultural backgrounds in their own terms. Whether through song, art, or messages calling to action, we encouraged our guests to delve into the spirit of positive representation and its potential to affect change. Striped Light, a local letterpress printmaking studio, helped visitors make their own posters to promote change. To advance the exhibition's theme of civic engagement, we also welcomed representatives from the League of Women Voters—a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides assistance in voter registration and education. Altogether, these collaborations and exhibition gave the museum an opportunity to forge stronger relationships with the communities we serve.



[top] Members of our roundtable share their stories of civil engagement.

[bottom] An event participant shows her family portrait.

A photograph of a museum educator, Callie Bennett, smiling and interacting with two young girls at a craft table. The table is covered with art supplies, including paint palettes and brushes. In the background, a museum exhibit is visible with a sign that reads "ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE NATIVE PEOPLES OF TENNESSEE".

Callie Bennett, center right, assistant educator, works on a craft with young visitors during *Vamos al Museo*, an educational program conducted in Spanish.

Support Our Dedicated Staff

Your investment provides funding for dedicated museum staff working to support our education programs, the museum store, outreach efforts, marketing, and more! For more information or to make a gift now, call 865-974-2143 or visit tiny.utk.edu/mcclunggiving.

Malacology Collections Manager Excels in Post-Graduate Position



Kristin Irwin on the bank of a creek in the Barren River system in the winter of 2017.

Central to the McClung Museum's mission is training the next generation of scholars and museum professionals in our labs and galleries. Exemplary of this is recent museum alumna Kristin Irwin, who began work as collections manager of malacology in October 2014. During her time at the museum, she catalogued approximately 3,500 lots of freshwater mussels and snails, co-taught several freshwater mussel identification workshops, and coordinated volunteer work in the collection.

She assisted the museum's Curator of Malacology, Gerry Dinkins, with several research projects, including a study that resulted in the recording of a new freshwater mussel species for the state of Tennessee. Kristin gave presentations on the collection to undergraduate and graduate students from several academic departments. She represented the McClung Museum at multiple professional conferences, and shortly before her departure, she began the curation of a freshwater snails exhibit along with Gerry Dinkins.

For her master's research, Kristin conducted freshwater mussel surveys in the Harpeth and Duck River drainages in Middle Tennessee. She sampled more than 120 sites and documented an unfortunate loss of freshwater mussel diversity in the tributaries of both drainages. However, she also found previously unknown populations of several important species. This research will inform federal and state agencies in their future aquatic management decisions. A notable find of this study was a new record of the Salamander Mussel (*Simpsonaias ambigua*) in the Harpeth River system. Kristin will volunteer with the Harpeth Conservancy in Brentwood in education and public outreach regarding freshwater mussel biodiversity.

The knowledge and expertise that Kristin gained during her position at the museum prepared her for a professional post-graduate position. Kristin is now working with the US Geological Survey's Cooperative Research Unit at Tennessee Technological University, and will study the habitat requirements of mussels in the Duck River to assist agencies in their research.

New Acquisition: Syrian Tiles

The museum has been expanding Islamic holdings in the permanent Arts and Culture collections, and recently acquired excellent examples of tile work from Damascus, Syria.

Islamic art is noted for achievements in ceramics, especially brightly glazed tiles. A majority of ceramics are decorated with non-figural decorations including geometric or vegetal patterns, and calligraphy.

Through the generosity of the Siddiqi family and the Muslim community, the museum acquired a pair of Syrian tiles from the late 1500s to early 1600s, featuring calligraphy enclosed within floral borders in green, turquoise, and aubergine glazes. The Arabic script is in *thuluth*—a type of Islamic calligraphy featuring curved and slanting lines—and says: “Muhammad is the Prophet of God, the faithful keeper of the promise (of God).”

The arts flourished in 16th century Damascus, which was one of the most prosperous commercial centers of the Ottoman Empire. Calligraphy is considered the highest of Islamic arts, as it simultaneously transmits the words of the Prophet Muhammed and serves as artistic ornament.



Pair of Calligraphic tiles, late 16th - to early 17th Century, Damascus, Syria. Gift of the Siddiqi family and the Muslim community. 2018.11

Community Engagement

Curator of Academic Programs Welcomes UT Faculty

Before UT's fall semester started, the McClung's Curator of Academic Programs, Katy Malone, met with several colleagues to learn how to best serve the campus community. On August 29th, she held a meet-and-greet for faculty and staff. Guests wandered the galleries, looked over educational materials, received information about tours and the Object Study Room, and of course, socialized. These outreach efforts worked. Before the *For all the World to See* exhibition opened on August 31st, academic programs was scheduled to directly serve forty-eight courses from twenty-one separate academic units totaling approximately 1,200 students.



Geology Bus Tour Raises Money for Educational Outreach

The museum hosted its second geology themed bus tour, "Blue Ridge Foothills Geology: Windows and Geologic Contrasts" in August. The daylong excursion to geological sites was led by Bob Hatcher, distinguished scientist and Professor of Tectonics, and Tom Broadhead, Professor of Paleontology and Biostratigraphy and director of undergraduate academic advancement.

By providing these unique experiences, the museum is able to fulfill its mission of offering public programming while raising money for outreach. Thanks to the generosity of tour sponsor and museum board member, Howard Capito, as well as ticket purchasers, the museum raised almost \$3,000 in support of educational programming.

Professional Development Session on Ancient Egypt

On August 28, the museum offered a free professional development workshop on ancient Egypt for K-12 teachers. Representatives from Knox and adjacent counties, homeschool teachers, private school instructors, and museum docents participated in content training that included tours of our permanent exhibit and activities to be implemented in the classroom.

We thank Covenant Health for their continued support over the past 27 years, which has allowed us to engage with local teachers through education brochures and professional development events. The workshop was led by Ms. Debbie Woodiel, former museum educator and current volunteer at McClung.



In the Spotlight: Zack Plaster



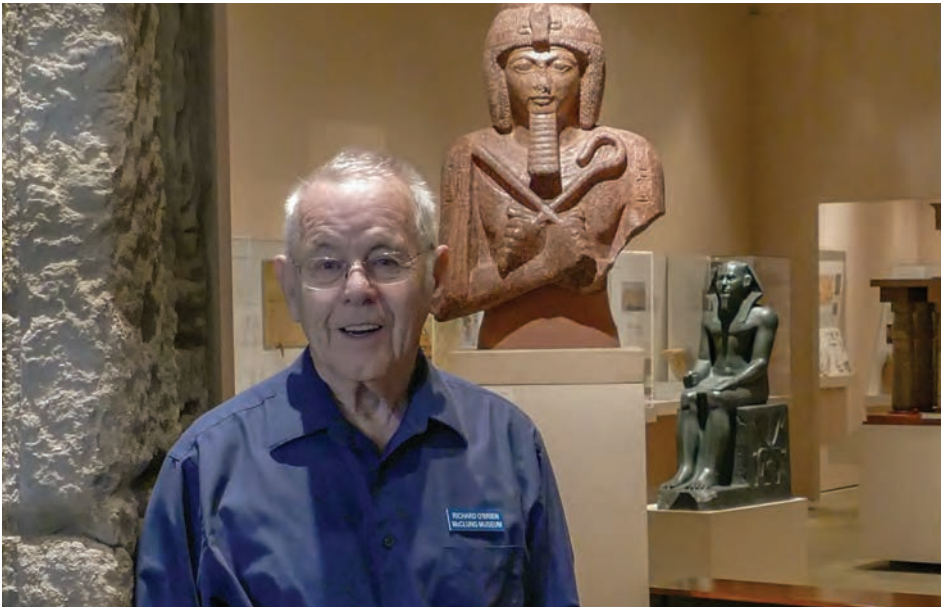
The museum welcomed Zack Plaster as its first communications coordinator in July. He is in charge of all of the museum's social media, as well as coordinating PR and marketing efforts.

The McClung was the first museum Zack ever visited on a school field trip in 1998. In the years since, Zack has developed a diverse skill set that combines public relations, community outreach, art direction and production, digital and print marketing, and event management.

Zack graduated from University of Tennessee in 2015 and then served as a Digital Interactions Manager at AC Entertainment. He handled marketing for seven distinct music festivals in addition to several historic theaters in the region: the Tennessee Theatre, the Bijou Theatre, and the Tivoli Theatre.

When his computer is closed you'll find him coordinating events downtown, collaborating with local artists and business owners, or concocting and serving cocktails at the Public House.

Volunteer Profile, In Memoriam: Richard O'Brien



Many will remember the frequent presence and warm humor of Richard O'Brien, who volunteered and served as a docent for the museum's Egypt gallery for eighteen years. The museum expresses its gratitude for his generous service and mourns the loss of Richard, who died on August 22.

Richard was a consultant for the defense and aerospace industry, and retired from the United States Air Force reserves. He brought the same intellect and meticulousness that served him so well in his career to his work at the museum, communicating his love of history and ancient Egypt to thousands of K-12 students.

Richard was a great docent—knowledgeable, reliable, confident—and I enjoyed chatting with him as we waited for our invariably late 6th graders. I'll miss seeing him very much.

—Debbie Woodiel, retired McClung Museum educator



**Thanks to
all museum
supporters
who voted us
“Best Museum
in Knoxville!”**

WE ALL THANK YOU!

During this season of thanksgiving, each of us at the museum extend our sincere gratitude for the many ways you have supported us in 2018.

McCLUNG MUSEUM STORE

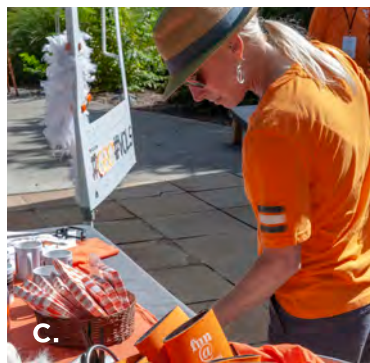
November 23–December 15

**Additional 15% off
during the holiday season**

People and Events



A. Exhibition Opening. [l-r] Tyvi Small, Executive Director of Talent Management, Diversity & Community Relations, and Tammi Small, Associate Director of Undergraduate Programs at UT's Haslam College of Business; and Civil Rights luminaries Rev. Dr. Harold Middlebrook, and Jonida and Theotis Robinson attend the exhibition opening for *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights*.



B. Special Guest. Sheila Pree Bright, artist, visits *For All the World to See* before her evening presentation as part of *Sights of Power: Race and Visual Culture Lecture Series* in the McClung Auditorium.



C. UT Family Weekend. One of the best things about the McClung Museum is that we are a part of the UT community. To celebrate, the Museum Store and Academic Programs held a tailgating party as a part of UT's Family and New Student Weekend. There were games and Vols-inspired products on sale. Guests had a great time, and we were able to raise the visibility of the McClung Museum among the broader community.

D. Cultural Festival/Tabling Events. Hanna Storey, intern for the education team (left) and Curator of Education, Leslie Chang Jantz (right) at the information table at Lonsdale Park to meet potential participants of *¡Vamos al Museo!*.

Triple Your Money

Save the date for the University of Tennessee's Big Orange Give Campaign on **Wednesday, November 14, 2018.**

Thanks to the generosity of Jeff & Vicki Chapman and Rich & Patty Mallicote, museum supporters can make their gift even more impactful.

These donors will match all gifts to the museum until funds run out, allowing you to **triple** your gift to the museum for one day only. Be on the lookout for more information as the date approaches.

Big ORANGE GIVE

**McClung Museum of
Natural History & Culture**

1327 Circle Park Drive
Knoxville, TN 37996

mcclungmuseum.utk.edu

Event Calendar

November

11/11 Veterans Day Bus Tour: "History in Brass and Stone-
Remembering Knoxville's Military Heritage"

alumni.utk.edu/veteransdaytour

11/12 Stroller Tour: Animals at Work

11/22 **MUSEUM CLOSURE**

11/28 Sip and Shop Fundraiser at EST8TE

December

12/1 Family Fun Day: Caroling with CBT & McClung

12/10 Stroller Tour: Queens of Egypt

12/24-12/25 **MUSEUM CLOSURE**

January

1/1 **MUSEUM CLOSURE**

1/12 Family Fun Day: Legends from the Far East

1/14: Stroller Tour: Ancient Menus

1/22 AIA Lecture, Barbara Heath, University of Tennessee:
"Colonial Encounters on the Chesapeake Frontier"

Upcoming Museum Closures

A reminder that the museum will be closed
on **Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve,
Christmas Day and New Year's Day**



Coming Soon: **Many Visions, Many Versions**

Special Exhibition, *Many Visions, Many
Versions: Indigenous Art from India*
opens on February 1, 2019.