

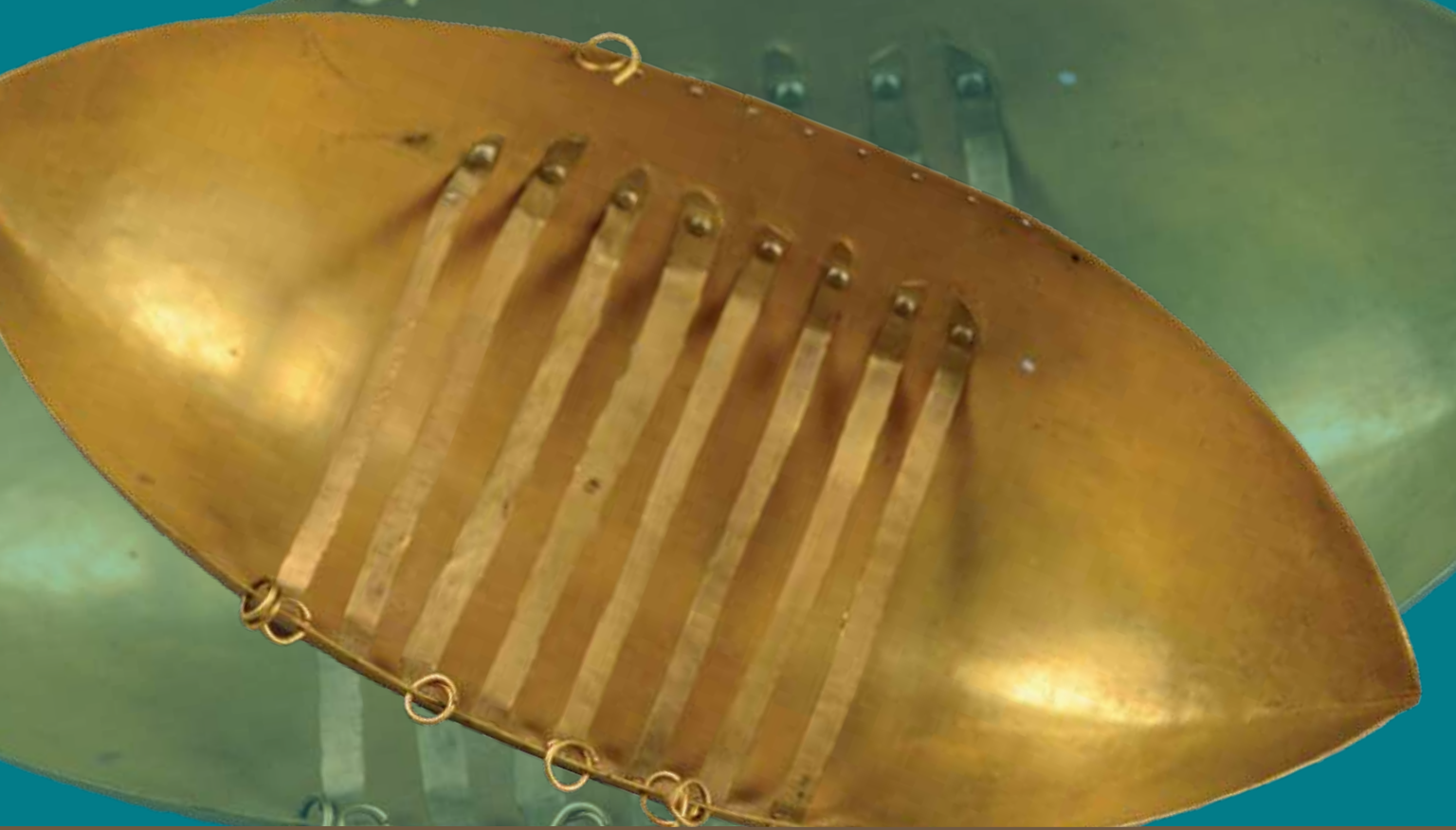
FALL 2016

# SPURLOCK

THE ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE WILLIAM R. AND CLARICE V. SPURLOCK MUSEUM  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

MUSEUM





## SPURLOCK MUSEUM MAGAZINE

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*On the front cover: foreground **Ardagh Chalice**, 1916.06.0028;*

*background **Gospel of Malaise Book-shrine**, 1916.06.0026.*

*Pictured above: **Brighter Boat**, 1916.06.0029.*

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AT ILLINOIS

Produced for the Spurlock Museum by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Office of Communications and Marketing.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This spring I announced my retirement to the Spurlock staff after 33 years at the University of Illinois, including 9 years as Director of the Spurlock Museum.



Wayne T. Pitard, Director Emeritus

I leave at a moment when the Museum is flourishing more strongly than ever. Over the past decade, the Museum has achieved accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums, and the annual number of people served by the Museum has increased 166% to a record 53,803 last year. Our Education Section teaches between 10,000 and 12,000 students each year from over 50 schools across Illinois. With our educational outreach program called *An Artifact Speaks*, supported by UI Extension, we are impacting school children in 94 of the 102 counties of Illinois. We serve increasing numbers of University students from a wide range of academic units, and we have developed strong collaborations with universities and research institutes around the world, including the United Kingdom, Cyprus, China, and France, as well as universities and museums across the US. Our website regularly attracts more than 100,000 unique visitors each year, who make increasing use of its many features. We have moved more deeply into community collaboration, last year joining with 41 community organizations for programs and events. The Museum's collections have expanded over 25% through donations of several exceptionally significant collections. Members of our staff have won numerous awards for their work, our endowment has increased by nearly 20%, and the University has supported significant upgrades in our infrastructure.

I cannot thank the staff of this Museum enough for all their brilliant work, dedication, and enthusiasm. They are the people who have made all of our achievements possible. They have been a joy to work with, and I will greatly miss our day-to-day interactions. Dr. Susan R. Frankenberg, the Coordinator for the University's Museum Studies Program and longtime friend and supporter of the Museum, will become Interim Director for the 2016–2017 academic year, while a national search is undertaken for my permanent replacement. She is a spectacular leader, which the Museum recognized while I was on sabbatical in 2013, and she will continue to move the Museum in exciting new directions. We will also have a new Director of Education, Dr. Elisabeth Stone, who will ably succeed our wonderful Tandy Lacy, who led the Education Section from the time the Museum was being planned in the late 1990s.

I want to thank the members of the Museum Board, whose dedication to supporting the Museum and its mission has been an inspiration to me. The same can be said of the wonderful members of the Museum Guild, who, over the life of that organization, raised half a million dollars for our educational programs. I want to thank our curators, most of whom are faculty members, for their massive contributions to both the permanent and temporary exhibits, as well as for their consultation on the artifacts offered to us as gifts. I want to thank our donors, both large and small, who have entrusted their artifacts and/or funds to the Museum so that its mission may continue to expand. I thank the many higher administrators here at the University—Deans, Provosts, Chancellors, Presidents, Budget Officers, Foundation Officers, Advancement Officers and others—who have recognized the importance of the Spurlock and its mission to the University, the community, the State of Illinois, and the world and who have supported us in good times and in bad. And finally, to our visitors I express my gratitude for your interest in the Museum, and I encourage you to continue to make the Spurlock an important part of your family's education, enjoyment, and life.

**Wayne T. Pitard**



## BOARD UPDATE

It is my honor to serve as the Spurlock Museum Board president for the calendar years 2016 and 2017. I am certainly getting to serve in interesting times.

As of August 15, Professor Wayne Pitard has retired after serving as Director for nine years. He will be missed, but his magnificent legacy will live on. We are fortunate to have Dr. Susan R. Frankenberg as the Interim Director. I have had the pleasure of working with Dr. Frankenberg for a few years while we developed the Illinois Distributed Museum at the University, and I am eager to get to work with her at Spurlock as well.

As of July 1, the Spurlock Museum Guild has folded its tents after many years of outstanding philanthropic service. The Spurlock Board is in the process of modifying its bylaws and organization in order to fill some of the void. We are excited about the prospects but recognize the magnitude of the task.

In early 2017, the University of Illinois will celebrate its sesquicentennial. The Spurlock Museum is planning a major exhibit that will open in August of 2017 for this celebration of the University's 150-year history. The primary goal of the exhibit is to tell the story of key moments in the University's early history and the cultural context that enabled it to develop from a mid-level state university to the premiere research institution that it is today. The exhibit will be principally in the Campbell Gallery but will also be integrated with other exhibits throughout the Museum. This exhibit should bring many new visitors to Spurlock.

The purpose of the Spurlock Board, as modified for the new bylaws and stated on Spurlock's website is:

*... to serve as a liaison between the Spurlock Museum and its communities: the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the State of Illinois, and the world at large. The Board develops and enhances relationships with individuals and organizations in order to raise the awareness of the mission, assets, and needs of the Museum. It serves in an advisory capacity to the Museum and the Museum Director.*

These are fancy words for saying that our purpose is to bring people and money into the Museum. Finding new ways to get the word out about the fantastic exhibits and collections at Spurlock is high on the Board's priority list. With the rare and one-of-a-kind artifacts Spurlock has on display, this should be an easy task. Certainly, this magazine is a great vehicle for spreading the word. Everyone reading this magazine is invited to visit the Museum again and bring friends along.

**Michael L. VanBlaricum**



**Michael L. VanBlaricum,**  
Spurlock Museum  
Board President



Facsimile: *Soiscéal Molaise (Gospel of Molaise) Book-shrine*, 1916.06.0026.

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## The Spurlock Museum Guild Says Farewell

by Claire Skaperdas and Kim Sheahan

After decades of dedicated service, the Spurlock Museum Guild decided to wind down as a formal organization as of July 1, 2016. Founded in 1989 with the mission of supporting the then-World Heritage Museum, the scope of Guild projects grew over the years and as WHM moved into our new building. The most popular Guild event was always the auction, bringing together people from across central Illinois who continue to share a love of the Museum—and of a fun night out! The Guild's extensive fundraising projects, totaling half a million dollars, have supported a wide range of educational projects and resources. Guild funds endowed a scholarship program for students pursuing a museum career, secured the purchase of artifacts for the permanent and teaching collections, sponsored visits to other museums, and maintained a long-running annual lecture and performance series.

Many Guild members have also served on the Museum Board and as volunteers in the building, staffing the information desk, processing artifact records, and helping with tours, programs, and events. Guild members have also encouraged important relationships with departments across campus and with other cultural and educational agencies in town, including collaborative events with the Krannert Art Museum Council.

The legacy of the Spurlock Museum Guild will thrive. You will continue to see familiar member faces at events and Board meetings. Look for their name above the door the next time you visit the Resource Center. Smile as you take a moment to sit and relax in the Prairie Terrace Garden. Celebrate the excitement of school children who will savor Museum experiences through an endowment that will support programs for decades to come. The staff is truly grateful for the Guild's dedication, enabling us to share the treasures of the Museum with communities both near and far.



Mehri Cowan, Jane Burkhardt, and Joy Thornton-Walter work on auction materials at a table in front of World Heritage Museum displays.



Iris Swanson, Joy Thornton-Walter, Carol Gomez, Gwynn Nicholadis, Claire Skaperdas, and Pola Triandis prepare for an event in the 1990s.



Guild officers past and present gathered at the farewell party last spring. Photo courtesy of Allan Campbell.

# REPRESENTING SPIRITS IN

A unique

“**W**HAT MAKES AMAZONIA ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE and yet little understood, apart from the failure to properly historicize and compare our understanding of ethnographic practice, is its shamanic world view...the belief in the dual nature of reality, which is both visible and invisible, and in constant transformation.”<sup>(1)</sup>

The word *shaman* (and the rare feminine form *shamanin*) comes from the Tungus language of Central Asia. Siberia is where much early description and research took place, and it is from this area that shamanism probably entered the Americas. The word itself is now used in many Western languages, including English and Spanish, and more recently in Amazonian Jivaroan and Quichua, as a synonym of *uswishin* (Jivaroan) and *yachaj* (Quichua). Shamanism constitutes a numinous orientation to the world. There are realms that most of us cannot “see,” and there are spirit and other forces all around us that we seldom, if ever, encounter directly. Beliefs in shamanic power and insights may constitute the world’s oldest religion. Contemporary shamanism is alive and well within systems of modern economy and Western medicine. It constitutes a complementary worldview, with the following basic characteristics, where spirits are the central feature.

*Coming and going* between realms of the worlds is fundamental to a shamanic perspective. This means that not only humans have the capability of experiencing other worlds, but that the inhabitants of these worlds, who we usually call “spirits,” have the same capacity to come and go to and from our world. Connections among humans and spirits are often made through their respective souls.

Two concepts help us appreciate shamanic perspectives. The first of these is *presence* and the second is *prescience*. Presence simply means that there is a real person in this world, the shaman, who has the ineffable ability to move in and out of the world of spirits. Prescience refers to the ability to perceive the space of shamanic presence in the future.

The shaman sees “beyond” the world of the present and presages things and events to come.

The South American Gallery of the Spurlock Museum subtly but firmly underscores the important insight expressed in the opening quotation to this article, which was written by two distinguished specialists in Amazonia, Laura Rival of Oxford University and the late Neil L. Whitehead of the University of Wisconsin. Entering the gallery, one immediately views a vitrine with a magnificent shaman’s stool, called *bancu* in Quichua and *chimbui* in

Jivaroan, donated by the late Enrique Moya, of Amazonian Ecuador. The stool is in the shape of the water turtle, which is the seat of the master spirit, Sungui.

The human shaman sits on this beautifully carved stool



Shaman's stool, *chimbui*, by Enrique Moya, 2001.05.0013.



Sungui, by Apacha Vargas, 1997.15.0447.

and is visited by spirits, who come to him in various forms. From them he gains powers to “see” illness and the ability to heal. After taking his soul-vine brew, two master images come to the shaman, one after the other. Each image is identified by women master potters who “name” the spirits as Sungui, master of the water domain and “first shaman,” and Amasanga, master of the rain-forest domain.

Sungui appears as the giant anaconda and gives the shaman the power to “see” (*ricuna*). Then Amasanga arrives as the great black jaguar, and brings the first spirit helpers who are first seen as flickering, fluttering fireflies and heard as buzzing bees. Although we cannot see spirits in our everyday lives, they are manifest in Amazonian Ecuador through stones regarded by indigenous people as “sentient.” That is, they have a “life within” that can be manifest when they transform to other beings. Real Amazonian shaman’s stones are in the “Control of Power” vitrine to the right of the shaman’s stool. Each has its own song and its own motions that we do not normally see or hear. Women potters possess the analog of shaman stones in their burnishing stones (called *amulana rumi*), displayed in the vitrine to your left, entitled “Sustaining Life.”

As the séance proceeds, the shaman actually leaves his seat of power to fly upward and away to gain more spirit power. As he does this, the people present see the shaman on his seat of power while he himself has moved above them into the world of spirits. The shaman now is in grave danger, because if he fails to return to the human world he will die and stay in the spirit world. By returning to the human world, he is imbued with even more power, and now he can “see” the illness that afflicts his patient. As he looks into the patient’s body, he perceives a dart, or many darts, some looking like the point of a stinging scorpion, others like razor blades; each is enclosed in purple mucus.

We have already seen ceramic images



Amasanga, by Apacha Vargas, 1997.15.0453.



Anaconda, by Apacha Vargas, 2001.05.0105.

# a SHAMANIC universe

tour through the South American Gallery by Curator Norman E. Whitten, Jr.



**Jaguar**, maker unknown, Curaray, Ecuador, 2001.05.0112.

of spirits, made by women with deep knowledge of the shamanic universe who are able to actually *represent spirits*. Most, but not all, Canelos Quichua shamans are male, and they are known as *yachaj*, one who knows, or more likely *sinchi yachaj*, powerful (or strong) one who knows. If they attain the status of *bancu* they serve, at times, as the seat of power of a spirit shaman. The *bancu* is often referred to as *muscuyuj*, a visionary. Women who are master potters may be called *yachaj warmi*, woman who knows, or most often *sinchi muscuyuj warmi*, powerful visionary (or image possessing) woman. While making pottery, women cross the boundaries between their everyday world and the spirit world. They do this through song, graphic imagery, and perhaps visionary activity, induced by neither tobacco nor any psychotropic substance.

A woman potter is the quintessence of creative prescience. She begins with a large mound of clay, takes from it a lump with which to work, rolls coils on a turtle-shaped board analogous to the male shamanic board for cutting tobacco (both symbolizing the seat of power of the water spirit shaman, Sungui). She is inspired by and helped by Nungüi, the strictly feminine spirit of garden soil and pottery clay, often known as Manga Allpa Mama, mother of clay. With her command of clay and rock dyes and slips, brushes made from her hair, scrapers from calabash shells, sentient burnishing stones analogous to shaman's stones, and insightful knowledge of her world of humans and spirits, the potter "sees" images of what she will make: drinking bowls, storage jars, figurines, playful images to be brought forth during festivals. We see lumps of clay and paraphernalia in the here and now; she looks forward in time and sees an array of colorful and fine ceramics to bring aesthetic feminine powers to her house, kin group, community, and beyond.

To illustrate how such vision works, let us think about the Wayalumba Supai. This is the imagery of a black person or black spirit with the appearance of a person, whose feet are on "backwards" or "crooked"—*chulla chaqui*, or contorted in some unusual manner. He lives in

the forest near indigenous habitations and beats his drum to another rhythm. Sometimes he lures unsuspecting children to him. Here is how, some years ago, Esthela Dagua, working in her house in urban Puyo, envisioned and then created the image of this spirit, after learning that we had been told of him. She said she made the ceramic piece so that others like us could "see" the Wayalumba beating his drum, which, incidentally, is attached to his shoulder with an anaconda (Sungui) motif.

The dark side of shamanism is the awful power to wound and/or to kill adversaries by sending magical darts, called *supai biruti* in Quichua, *tsentsak* in Jivaroan. Powerful, vision-filled women sometimes represent this power in their ceramic imagery. An example high up in the "Control of Power" vitrine, which has the shaman's seat of power, and his shaman's stones, is that of "stinging death," represented here by the high flying black scorpion, made by Apache Vargas to illustrate this process to a Western audience.

Because the indigenous world is embedded in a Western world established by conquest in the late fifteenth—early sixteenth century, and maintained in various ways over five hundred years, the master potters of Canelos Quichua culture represent the spirits of this Western world in their ceramic images. In this first vitrine, for example, we have the image of the awesome *Jurijuri supai* (Hurihuri spirit). This spirit is a Western transformation of forest-spirit master Amasanga that took place underground before the forest spirit and its Western analog emerged to form the two human worlds of "us" and "other." The *Jurijuri supai* is master of monkeys, which are hunted for food by the Canelos Quichua men. In turn, the *Jurijuri* regards us of the Western world as "monkey people," and he grew a mouth out of the back of his neck in order to eat monkey people, and everyone who smells like a human, whether indigenous or non-indigenous.

When the shaman's mind is "opening" after he takes his soul-vine brew, spirits come to him, as noted above. The late Pastora Guatatuca illustrated this process when thinking about her powerful shaman father-in-law Eliseo Vargas in Unión Base, Amazonian Ecuador, as he would open his mind to let spirits as buzzing bees in before he flew to other worlds while chanting in his native Zaparoan language. In the vitrine on "Sounds of Spirits" we can see her imagery in the ceramic cornet. The



**Nungüi (Manga Allpa Mama)**, by Rebeca Gualinga, 1997.15.0145.



**After taking his hallucinogenic soul-vine brew, he sees snakes and fireflies coming to him as spirit helpers**, by Alfonso Chango.



**The shaman flies up off his stool to encounter spirits**, by Alfonso Chango.



**Wayalumba Supai**, by Esthela Dagua.





mouth symbolizes the opening of the spirit world and on the cornet's bell she painted the image of forest spirit Amasanga.

To conclude, many years ago, soon after we were discussing some intensive shamanic activity affecting a number of close families, Esthela Dagua created an entire shamanic curing scene. In the left front is the powerful shaman sitting on his seat of power, chanting over his prone patient, and shaking his leaf bundle. As intensity builds, people see flickering snake tongues emerging from the tips of this bundle. On the floor to his right are his spirit stones, and to his left is a roll of tobacco that allows him and his female helpers to clarify his visions. His wife, to his left, holds a bowl of masticated manioc mash, called *asua*, to cleanse his mouth and throat, while the supplicant, sister of the sick man, kneels before the shaman and patient, requests shamanic help, and supports the shaman's quest by clarifying his visions.



Scorpion, by Apacha Vargas, 1997.15.0459.



Shamanic curing session, by Esthela Dagua.



Jurijuri supai, by Santa Gualinga, 1997.15.0146.



Cornet, by Pastora by Pastora Guatatuca, 1997.15.0307.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In Ecuador, assistance in helping us to “see” (ricuna) relationships and appreciate cultural dynamics have come from many people. For specific help that led directly to texts, images, and interpretations, we thank the late Virgilio Santi, the late Gonzalo Vargas, the late Soledad Vargas, the late Venancio Vargas, the late Pastora Guatatuca, the late Domingo Salazar, the late Eucebia Aranda, the late Alicia Canelos, Amadora Aranda, Rebeca Gualinga, the late Severo Vargas, Marcelo Santi Simbaña, Faviola Vargas Aranda, Clara Santi Simbaña, the late Abraham Chango, Alfonso Chango, Luzmila Salazar, the late Jacinta Estela Dagua Malaber, Marta Jobita Vargas Dagua, and Delicia Dagua. There are contributions by every one of these long-time collaborators in the gallery. For assistance on preparation of this article, I thank Beth Watkins for her editorial help, and Jack Thomas for two of the photographs.

#### NOTES

<sup>(1)</sup> Laura Rival and Neil L. Whitehead, editors. 2001. *Beyond the Visible and the Material: The Amerindianization of Society in the Work of Peter Rivière*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 16.

#### RECOMMENDED READING

Dorothea Scott Whitten and Norman E. Whitten, Jr. “Seeing” South America. *Spurlock Magazine*, Fall 2011.  
Dorothea Scott Whitten and Norman E. Whitten, Jr. 2016. *From Myth to Creation: Art from Amazonian Ecuador*. Second, revised addition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.



# EXHIBIT PROFILE:

## Medieval Irish Masterpieces in Modern Reproduction

*With Professor Charles D. Wright, Curator*

### **Beth Watkins:** How did the idea for the exhibit come up in the first place?

**Charles Wright:** It goes back to when I first came to University of Illinois in 1986. I quickly discovered that our library has a really great collection for Celtic Studies, including early materials from the 19th century, particularly facsimiles of early Irish manuscripts that were produced by the Royal Irish Academy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I also knew that there had been a Celtic scholar in the English Department named Gertrude Schoepperle, and I assumed she was responsible for the collection. Eventually, I found that she had published an article entitled “Irish Studies at the University of Illinois” in 1918 in a Dublin journal, and I was astonished to read there that she had grand plans for an Irish Foundation at the U of I. The then-president of the University, Edmund James, had been very much behind the plan and was helping her raise money, and their goal was a \$100,000 endowment. Now James could not appropriate that kind of money, so they had to try and raise it privately. The University did commit money to buy the metalwork replica collection that is part of our exhibit and a lot of the Celtic Studies books and facsimiles. In addition, the University acquired the James Collins Irish collection, a major private library of books on Irish history and a great collection of Irish political cartoons that is now in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

The plans were to have an archaeological museum, an art museum, a library, an outreach program, fellowships, and professorships. It was incredibly ambitious! Schoepperle was very active in building this. She spoke at the Irish Fellowship Club in Chicago, the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Bloomington [Illinois], and she set up a little extension called the St. Louis School of Irish Learning, where she went and gave lectures. She created a Celtic Club on campus that had events and performances. She was a dynamo.

When I read all this, I was astonished and quite curious—what happened? We obviously don’t have an Irish Foundation at the University. I learned that by 1919 she had left for Vassar, and I always thought it’d be interesting to find out what happened. In the late 1980s I visited the old World Heritage Museum and saw the facsimile of the Ardagh Chalice on display. This is one of the most spectacular pieces of early Irish metalwork, an eighth-

century communion chalice, silver with elaborate decorations and jewels. It was an amazingly exacting replica, and I was so impressed. But as far as I knew then, it was just a one-off. I didn’t know why we had it, there was no label that indicated it was part of a larger collection, and of course there was no database to consult.

All of this percolated for about 25 years, until in 2015, when teaching an Old Irish class I remembered the chalice and thought it’d be fun to bring the class over to see it. I looked for it on Spurlock’s web database and was astonished to find that there were about two dozen more of these reproductions of early Irish metalwork! So I called to make arrangements to visit, and when my class came over, I was astonished at the quality of the reproductions. It occurred to me that we really ought to do something to display them and let people know about them. I also knew the University had a spectacular Book of Kells reproduction, published in the 1990s, which not too many libraries have. Together, these reproductions and facsimiles would make a great exhibit, to showcase the University’s collections and to focus on the incredibly fine artistic production that existed in the Middle Ages in Ireland. The manuscript illuminations are some of the finest in all of medieval Europe, and the metalwork pieces display some of the finest craftsmanship. Some of their secrets of manufacture are still not really understood.

I also wanted to think about reproduction as a cultural phenomenon in itself. Why do people make facsimiles? What cultural value and meaning do they have? For Ireland, the Book of Kells has come to epitomize Irish culture, and the Chi-Rho [the first two letters of “Christos,” the Greek word for “Christ,” often overlaid to form a symbol to represent Christianity] page has been reproduced countless times. This is much like the reproduction of the Japanese print *The Wave*, which has come to epitomize Japanese artistic heritage.



Ardagh Chalice, 1916.06.0028.



Shrine of St. Lachtin’s Arm, 1916.06.0031.

Cross of Cong, 1916.06.0032.



Ireland had been a colony of Great Britain since the 12th century, and by the Act of Union of 1801 was a formal part of the United Kingdom. There was a strong nationalist movement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and it had a cultural side. One aspect was simply an attempt to revive the Irish language, which was beginning to die out. Ireland was becoming a monolingual English culture. There was a revival of Gaelic culture and art, and many of the nationalists and the artists associated with them turned to the medieval

Irish arts for inspiration. These works became symbols of Irish national culture. For example, Maud Gonne, who was quite famous as a nationalist, activist, and an actor (and also for her turbulent relationship with William Butler Yeats), founded a nationalist group for women called “Daughters of Ireland,” and they adopted as their badge a replica of a medieval Irish brooch. So there’s a political connection here between medieval Irish artifacts and modern Irish nationalism: wearing an Irish brooch became a political statement.

I also remembered hearing that during the Easter Rising in 1916, rebels had used these large manuscript facsimiles in their barricades. When I finally tracked the actual story down, what actually happened was that some rebels had been scouting for heavy materials to use as barricades during the Rising. They came to the School of Irish Learning in Dublin, saw these heavy facsimiles, and said “Those will stop bullets!” But another rebel who had studied there told them that these books represented ancient Irish culture and what they were fighting for, so they all swore they’d rather die than lay a hand on these facsimiles. That’s a really good indication of the political and cultural meaning these works had for them.

It just so happens that the metalwork collection we have by Edmond Johnson Ltd. was acquired in 1916, so I thought it would be great to have the exhibit in 2016, the centenary of the Irish Easter Rising. So, I’m sort of using that as a way to focus on the cultural and political meaning of these artifacts and on the significance of reproductions themselves as reproductions.

**BW: I wonder if the familiarity with Ireland of our average visitor is focused on more recent history like the political violence of the Troubles. You’re linking these things very powerfully with the imagery of Irish art, and that might be a very different experience than what people think they know about art and politics.**

**CW:** Many people will have seen the Chi-Rho page of the Book of Kells, maybe without even realizing that’s what it was. It’s an emblem of Irish culture—there was even an Academy-award nominated animated film about it a few years ago (*The Secret of Kells*, 2009). The origin of the Book has been debated lately; there’s even been a claim that it’s actually English, though now most people think it was perhaps produced on Iona, an Irish monastery off the coast of



Tara Brooch, 1916.06.0022.

Northumbria. In the movie, the book is begun there and then finished in Ireland once the illuminator flees Iona when the Vikings attack the island.

**BW: Spurlock has lots of replicas of lots of things, so digging into some of these topics about the various meanings and significance of reproductions will be good for us, broadly, beyond just this collection. We haven’t yet approached these questions in such in-depth and organized ways in an exhibit.**

**CW:** I want to put a lot of emphasis on the historiography of these reproductions and the scholars associated with them. A scholar named Maggie Williams has written a book called *Icons of Irishness* about how certain kinds of images, like the Book of Kells or the Irish ringed cross, have become emblems that people automatically associate with some ideal of Irishness, culture, nationality. It’s quite an accessible book, and Professor Williams spoke at the symposium held in association with the exhibit. I wanted to focus on both and the relationship between original and facsimile and what that relationship means in the Irish cultural context. Facsimiles have a life and significance of their own. James Joyce had a partial facsimile of the Book of Kells that he took with him everywhere, saying it was “the most purely Irish thing we have.” He thought it was a spectacular, intricate work of art, and he even compared his own prose to the artwork. Edmond Johnson’s facsimiles are considered masterpieces of Gaelic Revival art. They are very rare now, and I think the only complete collection is in the Smart Museum at the University of Chicago. The Smart Museum’s predecessor purchased the complete set made to display at the Chicago Columbian Exposition in 1893.

**BW: Was the Irish community in Chicago part of the reason that the University of Chicago has a complete set?**

**CW:** Probably, although we don’t know for sure. There was an ad putting the metalworks up for sale in Chicago newspapers at the time. Now these replicas are seen as World’s Fair memorabilia as well. One of the people who was inspired by the displays of these replicas was Thomas O’Shaughnessy, who was an Irish-American artist who specialized in stained glass. He became fascinated with Irish medieval art, and he eventually designed some stained glass at the Old St. Patrick’s Cathedral on West Adams Street in Chicago that was inspired by it.

**BW:** Sometimes it can be hard in a world cultures museum to find examples of influence that people can actually go and see in their day-to-day life, and this is a great one that people here can go investigate without much trouble.

**BW: What is the story of Celtic Studies as an academic discipline in the United States?**

**CW:** A lot of the major centers are in places where there are important Irish-American communities, like Harvard and Boston College. Notre Dame is another. Kuno Meyer, who was the greatest Celtic scholar of his day, was brought to Illinois by Schoepperle to give lectures and teach courses, but he was so horrified by what he called the “primitive” conditions of Urbana in 1915 that he left after about a week. Meyer wrote to President James pleading with him to do

whatever he could for Schoepperle and saying that the future of Celtic Studies in America depended on her efforts. At Illinois, medieval Celtic Studies has continued intermittently by the accident of having a medievalist who was interested in Ireland in a given department. If you don't have a formal program or deliberately seek scholars out, that's how it goes in many areas. One specialist in medieval Ireland we've had was Edwin Carter Rae in the Art History Department (1947–79)—he was actually one of the “Monuments Men”—and his interest was later medieval Irish funerary sculpture. His photographs went to Trinity College Dublin (and are online), but his papers are in the UIUC archives.

Roland Smith was a Celtacist in the English Department in the 1950s. I've worked in medieval Celtic studies as a secondary specialization (Old English is my main field). So there's been just a handful of people pursuing that subject since Schoepperle, but there have been many more who have worked on modern Irish history, culture, and literature.

There's an interesting link between the history of Celtic Studies at Illinois and the Easter Rising. President James was very enthusiastically involved in Schoepperle's plans, writing letters to scholars, raising money, and acquiring collections. The founder of the Irish Volunteers, in effect a militia, was a scholar named Eoin MacNeill. He was a famous medieval Irish historian at University College Dublin. The Easter Rising was fomented by some more radical members of that group, and when MacNeill found out what they intended to do, he tried to have it called off. He had

notices countermanding the order published in the newspapers. As a result a lot fewer volunteers turned out for the Rising. Kuno Meyer, after declining an offer of a permanent position at UIUC by James, recommended MacNeill, who had been arrested after the Rising. James was interested and even wrote to the British ambassador urging MacNeill's release from prison, but it seems that no offer was ever actually made.

**BW:** This exhibit is not primarily about literature, but I know from reading the labels that you do bring in the stories that are told in or referenced by these artworks. What are some of the challenges of talking about stories in a three-dimensional space of an exhibit?

**CW:** Most of the manuscripts we're displaying are of Irish vernacular literature, both secular and Christian. Part of the challenge was simply deciding what to focus on in a label in the very limited space we have. My graduate

Gorget, 1916.06.0009.



assistant Kelly Williams and I have been trying to pick highlights that we thought would be interesting to people and that would illustrate some of the range of early Irish literary production. For example, we have some pages open to the great epic the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*—it's the central narrative of the “Ulster Cycle” stories. Queen Medb and her husband Ailill of Connacht raid Ulster to capture a great bull. She attacks when the men of Ulster are bizarrely suffering the labor pains of women as the result of a curse by a woman from the Otherworld. The teenage Ulster hero Cú Chulainn holds off Medb's army single-handedly until the Ulstermen's pains have subsided. The Dublin General Post Office, where many of the rebels held out during the Rising, has a statue of the dying Cú Chulainn as a symbol of the rebellion.

**BW:** Of the components that make up the American cultural mosaic, I think Ireland and concepts of “Irish” feature very prominently in the popular imagination. So many people respond to the Irish parts of American heritage.

**CW:** People are definitely aware of the Irish immigrant experience in American history. Everyone knows about the famine and its impact, and many Americans have at least a passing familiarity with some Irish music, literature, and dance, and of course St. Patrick's Day.

**BW:** If people want to see medieval Irish artifacts and sites on their travels, where should they go?

**CW:** Trinity College Dublin, of course, for the Book of Kells, and the National Museum of Ireland has the greatest collection of Irish antiquities. Many of the metalwork pieces we're displaying are reproductions of artifacts in the NMI collection. Ireland is covered with antiquities and old ruins from various ages like ring forts and monastic cells and other ecclesiastical sites. The most spectacular medieval monastic site is Glendalough, an easy day trip south of Dublin. It's like central casting for romantic ruins. The ruins are also quite well preserved, and the natural environment is incredibly beautiful. Unfortunately for those of us outside of Europe, very little by way of original medieval Irish art or manuscripts are outside of Ireland. Some manuscripts were taken by Irish monks and clergy on pilgrimage to Continental Europe. To leave Ireland, to be a voluntary exile, was an act of penance and a number of Irish saints did that deliberately, and they took some of their books with them.

*Medieval Irish Masterpieces in Modern Reproduction* is open now and runs through April 2, 2017.

Fibula, 1916.06.0006.



Shrine of St. Patrick's Bell, 1916.06.0025.



# Artifact Highlight:

## The 64-Pixel Plasma Display Panel

by Michael L. VanBlaricum

The Spurlock Museum celebrates the complexity of the human experience through the aspects of Body, Mind, and Spirit. The Central Core Gallery represents and displays this philosophy. In this gallery is a small twentieth-century electrical artifact that was developed for a research study named after the fifth-century BCE Greek philosopher Plato.

In the Technology case, behind a nineteenth-century Chinese gimbal-mounted compass, is a small, less than 2" by 2", piece of glass with wires connected to it labeled "Prototype 64-pixel Plasma Display." This one small artifact represents major developments in the evolution of education and entertainment. In fact, this little prototype represents the beginning of the

stories of the first use of a computer for pedagogy, the first time-shared education system, the

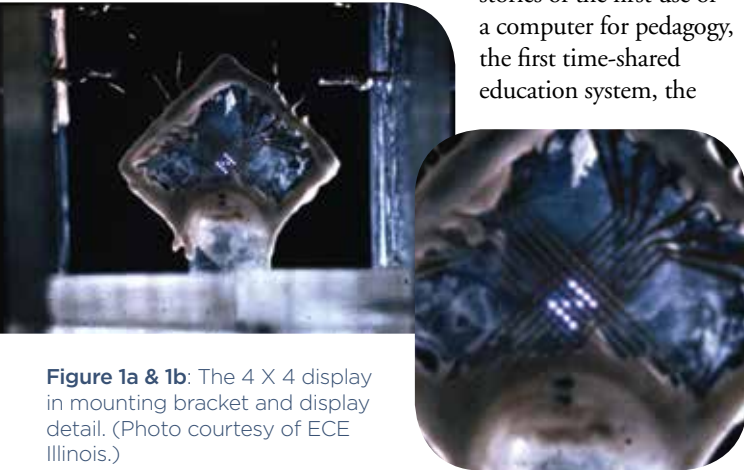


Figure 1a & 1b: The 4 X 4 display in mounting bracket and display detail. (Photo courtesy of ECE Illinois.)

first on-line community, the first flat panel computer screen, the first interactive touch screen, the start of on-line gaming, and the success of HDTV.

The invention of the plasma display panel was a direct response to a need by the PLATO project at the Coordinated Science Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The PLATO project was started in 1960 to study the possible application of computing technology to education. The approach was to develop a versatile interactive computer-based learning environment where students could directly interact with lesson programs through graphics terminals.

The name "Plato" was chosen for the philosopher's connection to teaching, and although it was typically capitalized in written materials, it was not originally an acronym. Subsequently, the backronym "Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations" was invented to fit the name.

In 1959, physics professor Chalmers Sherwin suggested the idea of using computers for education to William L. Everitt, the Dean of the College of Engineering at the University. Dean Everitt then presented the idea to Professor Daniel Alpert, the Director of the Coordinated Science Laboratory (CSL). Alpert convened a meeting of administrators, engineers, mathematicians, educators, and psychologists but didn't get anywhere with that team. Alpert then asked

Electrical Engineering professor Donald Bitzer (BSEE '55, MSEE '56, PhD '60) to run the project which began in 1960. Bitzer is now considered the father of PLATO.

By 1963, Bitzer's team had successfully demonstrated the automated teaching system, PLATO, within CSL. The original PLATO system (PLATO I), while innovative, was, by necessity, a bit of a kludge. To put this in perspective, we need to review the state of the art of computers, computer memory, and display systems which were available in the early 60s.

The computers being used then were large, mainframe, vacuum-tube-based systems. ILLIAC I was used as the computer for the PLATO I system. ILLIAC I was the first computer built and owned entirely by a U.S. educational institution. It was based on architecture developed by John von Neumann at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University but never built until 1952 at the University of Illinois. For PLATO, ILLIAC I digitally sent graphical and alphanumeric data to double-electron-gun storage tubes that were originally designed to display radar signals. One electron gun would write the data from ILLIAC I to the storage tube while the other rescanned the image in TV format for transmission to a standard TV monitor to display for the student. The original PLATO keyboard had to be built from scratch because computer keyboards didn't exist. The PLATO I TV display and homebrew keyboard are shown in Figure 2.

The proof-of-concept PLATO system worked well enough but had several drawbacks that would have to be overcome. The constant refreshing of the image using the TV set's cathode ray tube (CRT) was not well suited for the sustained display needed for the graphics required for educational lessons. Also, the CRT had no memory for holding a graphical image. Computer memory at the time was expensive and bulky because it was magnetic core memory; semiconductor memory didn't come along until the late 1960s. A practical real-world PLATO system would thus have to have a better way of mediating the exchange between the students and the computer.

A new display had to be invented. Professor Bitzer wanted a system that was well-suited for graphics, had memory, and could be used as a screen for images projected from behind via a slide projector. Bitzer felt that a plasma display was a potential solution to the problem. A plasma is one of the four fundamental states of matter, the others being solid, liquid, and gas. Plasmas are quite common on Earth and are observed regularly in the form of lightning, electric sparks, neon lights, some types of flames, and stars. A gas is usually converted to plasma either from a large voltage difference between two points



# Prototype

or by exposing it to extremely high temperatures.

Bitzer, along with H. Gene Slottow (PhD '64) and graduate student Robert Willson (BSEE '59, MSEE '61, PhD '66), started investigating the use of a matrix of discrete neon cells which could be addressed as an individual pixel as a possible solution. After a few false starts, they realized that the simplest configuration for the cells would be to drill a hole in a thin glass slide, place glass plates on either side of the slide with the hole in it, and attach driving electrodes on the outside of the glass plates.

In this configuration, the cell could be turned to the visible "on" or "1" state by applying a voltage signal strong enough to discharge the gas in the hole in the slide so it becomes visible plasma. By maintaining a sustaining ac signal on the electrodes, the cell would stay in the "on" state. It was discovered that the ac sustaining voltage could be much less than the voltage required for the initial discharge because of electrical charge accumulation on the cell walls which effectively provides part of the voltage needed to discharge the cell. The cell actually fires twice every ac cycle but it is rapid enough that flicker cannot be seen. The cell can be turned to the "off" or "0" state by applying a control signal which extinguishes the wall charge thus extinguishing the plasma because the required discharge voltage is not reached. This configuration is a bistable system that allows the plasma cell to maintain memory once it is turned on (1) or off (0).

The first device was built with an ultrasonically drilled hole fifteen thousandths of an inch (0.015 in.) wide. Very thin gold electrodes were deposited on the outside. The entire sandwich was sealed with epoxy on three sides and connected to a vacuum pump via a tube. The system was then pumped clean and back-filled with neon. This was July 1964 and the single cell glowed blue.

It was later learned that there had been a leak in the vacuum system and air, which is predominately nitrogen, had leaked into the system with the neon and resulted in a bluish white color. Ironically, this leak of nitrogen into the system also gave the plasma cell a good memory margin. A memory margin is the property that allows the cell to remain lit in the presence of a sustaining ac voltage which, as explained above, was significantly lower than the breakdown voltage required for the initial discharge of the cell. Hence, the memory of the discharged plasma cell (a lighted cell or pixel) could be maintained until another signal was sent to turn it off. An ac plasma display with

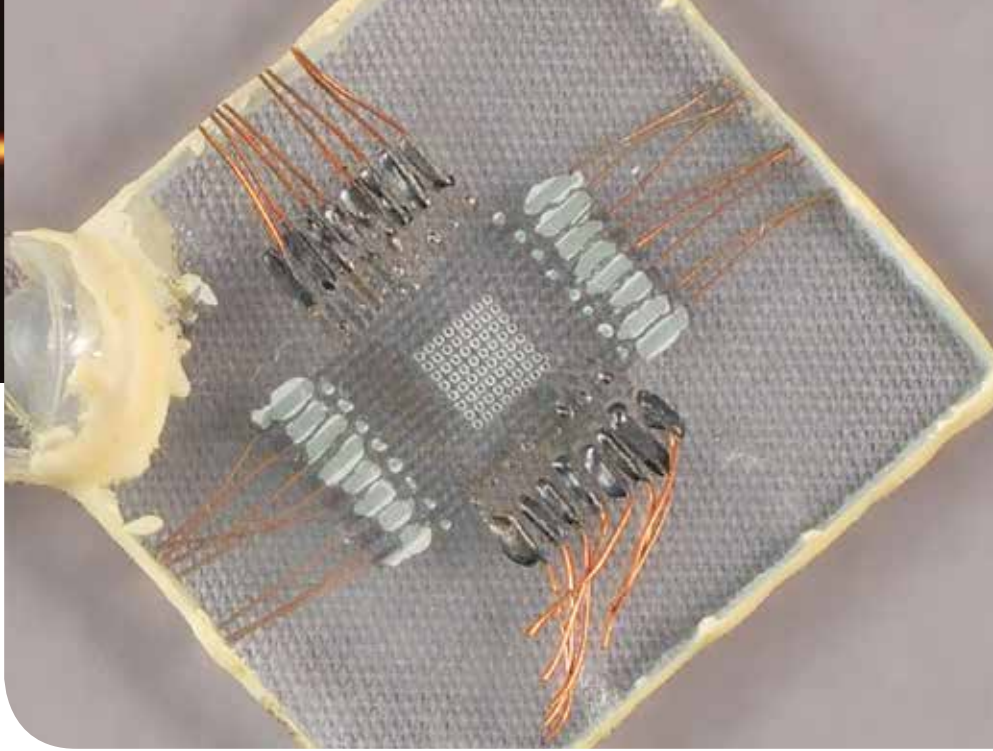


Figure 3: Spurlock Museum 8 X 8 Plasma Display Panel, 2012.09.0001.

memory was built and tested for the first time but with only one pixel. The principal function of the plasma display panel is to display and store information generated by a computer. The plasma display panel is not simply a display but it is also a bistable memory.

## From 1 Pixel to 16, Then to 64

Until the end of 1965, the research team continued to experiment with only single cells in order to understand the processes. After the single pixel device was successfully built, tested, and understood, the research was focused on developing a matrix of pixels. By the summer of 1966, they had built several 8 x 8 display panels but tested them initially in a 4 x 4 section. The earliest photo of a working plasma matrix shows a 4 X 4 display (16 pixels) with the letter "N" displayed in a blue glow (Figure 1). This was a major milestone in the development of the plasma display because it was the first addressable matrix of plasma cells. Upon close

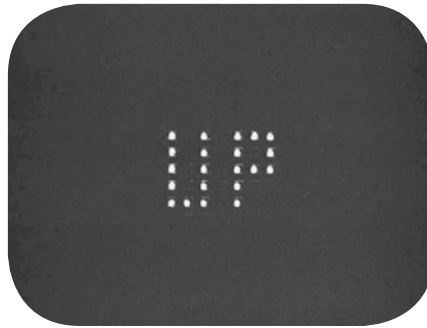


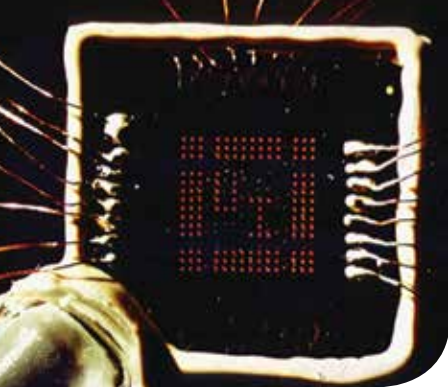
Figure 4: Appearance of characters on 8 X 8 Plasma Display Panel from CSL Report R-346, April 1967.

observation, one can see that this panel does have 64 holes and is configured as a potential 8 x 8 panel with eight gold electrodes on a side. However, even closer inspection shows that only four of the eight electrodes are connected to external circuitry and hence this becomes a 16-pixel matrix panel. This first addressable plasma matrix display was built by graduate student Brij Arora (MSEE'68, PhD '72).

When one inspects the 64-pixel Spurlock Museum panel, we see that there is also a matrix of 8 x 8 holes in

the panel, but in this case there are 16 total electrodes per row (Figure 3). Also, note that the leads are eight per edge to make up the 16. There are 4 electrodes per side that do not pass over or under the drilled holes. This configuration was made in order to keep a uniform electric field across the matrix of 64 holes. The addressable 8 x 8 matrix displayed at Spurlock was built by Roger Johnson (BSEE '65, MSEE '66, PhD '70).

Figure 2: The PLATO I configuration with a standard TV monitor and a homebrew keyboard. (Photo courtesy of ECE Illinois.)



**Figure 5:** A 16 X 16 plasma display panel using what is likely a Penning mixture of neon and argon which produces the orange display. The electrodes and the vacuum sealant (Torr Seal), as well as the connection of the glass feed tube, can be seen to be similar to the 8 X 8 Spurlock Museum device. (Photo courtesy of ECE Illinois.)

The 64 holes seen in the displays in both Figure 2 (the 4 X 4 panel) and Figure 3 (the 8 x 8 Spurlock panel) are clearly more

square than round. This is because the ultrasonic drill used was actually square in shape. Hence, the holes, while having rounded corners, tend to have flat sides. The ultrasonic drill used to make the matrix of 64 holes was square because an electrode eroding machine (also known as a wire electrical discharge machine) was used to form the array of 64 square steel drill bits. The drill was then ultrasonically vibrated to etch through the glass leaving squarish holes. Note that in Figure 4, the glow from each of the pixels also has a squarish shape. Figure 4 is illuminated from an 8 x 8 panel which is either the same or similar to the Spurlock panel.

The glass sheets used in the early matrix displays are about 0.006 inches, or 150 micrometers, thick. The distance between the adjacent cells is 0.025 inches, giving a potential cell density of 1600 cells per square inch. The gold electrodes were vapor deposited via a mask. The gold traces (electrodes) are extremely thin making them effectively transparent so the plasma discharge can be seen through them.

In the earliest work on the individual cell, an ultraviolet light source was used to stimulate the initial discharge by providing the needed photo electrons at the cell walls. However, it was found that with the 4 x 4 array any single cell in the “on” state provided enough photo electrons to serve as starting particles for the other cells.

The copper wires shown in the photographs of Figure 3 were connected to the gold leads via a silver epoxy paste. When the paste dried, it became a solid connection. It was not possible to solder because the gold was so thin it would be destroyed by the heat from the soldering process.

The glass tube connected to the corner of the device in Figures 2a and 3 is a test tube that had a slot cut in the bottom. It was slipped onto the glass sandwich and sealed to the plasma display panel. The tube was then connected to the vacuum system. The three glass sandwich and the test tube for the vacuum were all sealed with Torr Seal, a sealant that wouldn't outgas so that a vacuum could be pulled and the proper mixture of gases could be maintained. Because of the very small space between the three glass plates the apparatus was heated while it was pumped out.

The Computer-based Education Research Laboratory (CERL) was established in 1966 with Bitzer as the director, and it became a unit of the Graduate College under Daniel Alpert, who became Dean of that college in 1965. In 1967, Bitzer

received his own research funding directly from the National Science Foundation (NSF), which was focused on developing what would become PLATO IV. Until 1967, PLATO research had been funded by general support from the military to CSL.

## From Blue to Orange

Also in 1967, the research team learned how to achieve a good memory margin using a purer Penning mixture of neon and argon gas. This was achievable because of the development of electronic drive circuits that could produce sustaining voltages which were closer to square waves than sine waves. In addition, they were able to build circuits to address larger arrays allowing them to build 16 x 16 panels (or 256 addressable pixels) as shown in Figure 5. The new displays were orange due to the Penning mixture of predominantly neon gas. This orange plasma display was the color that the PLATO systems would see in the future.

While the patent for this device was not granted until 1971, the University of Illinois started licensing the technology exclusively to the glass company Owens-Illinois in 1967. In 1971, the first commercial grade 512 x 512 pixel flat-panel plasma display panel was developed, and by the early winter of 1972, PLATO IV terminals were being installed. PLATO IV had an impact beyond the immediate University of Illinois environment. In 1975, PLATO IV served 146 locations: 26 on campus, 10 elementary schools, 3 high schools, 6 community colleges, 22 government-related installations, 31 medical sites, 32 colleges and universities, and 16 at other off-campus locations. The PLATO IV terminals were a major step forward: not only were they flat panel graphics displays with memory, but they also had a touch screen capability, so students could touch the screen to answer questions.

The PLATO IV system with its network of terminals allowed the development of what was likely the first online community in the world. This interconnectivity of users gave very quick rise to the development of online forums, message boards, email, chat rooms, instant messaging, remote screen sharing, and multiplayer games. Because PLATO is a timesharing system it allows authors of lessons and their students to work from the same graphics display terminals.

But this is not the end of the story of the development of the plasma display panel. Plasma display panels, besides giving high resolution to computer graphics panels in the 1970s, led to large graphic computer monitors in the 80s, and, thanks to work by Larry Weber (BSEE '69, MSEE '71, PhD '75), ultimately to large area HDTVs in the 90s. In 2002, the national Academy of Television Arts and Sciences awarded an Emmy to Bitzer, Slottow, and Willson for their invention of the flat-panel plasma display.



**Figure 6:** An engineering graduate student writing code on a PLATO IV terminal in 1972.



**Figure 7:** A typical orange PLATO IV plasma screen display.

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# IN MEMORIAM:

## H. Ross Workman

### 1919–2016

By Wayne T. Pitard

The Spurlock Museum lost one of its most generous supporters when H. Ross Workman passed away on May 20, just a month shy of his ninety-seventh birthday. Ross and his wife Helen, who left us in 2013, played a critical role in the realization of our current building, endowing both our Ancient Mediterranean and Asian Galleries, as well as the lower level office and artifact preservation complex. Ross was a University of Illinois alumnus, earning his BS in Commerce in 1947 and his JD at the Law School in 1949. In 1955 he began working for Allstate Insurance and oversaw the company's real estate holdings for 27 years, eventually as Vice-President of Real Estate and Construction.

Ross and Helen's interest in supporting the Museum began in the late 1980s and resulted in an endowment for the Asian Cultures Gallery in 1993, followed by another generous endowment for the Ancient Mediterranean Gallery in 1995. As an expert working with the construction of buildings for Allstate, Ross became involved in the designing of the new Spurlock Museum building, not only arguing for the addition of a lower level administrative and storage area but also offering to support its construction financially to assure that it was completed. I am writing this tribute from my office in the Ross and Helen Workman Administrative Complex, whose importance to our day-to-day operations cannot be overestimated.

Helen and Ross attended the Grand Opening of the Spurlock in 2002 and remained intensely interested in it for the rest of their lives. In my visits to their home, I found that they both were delightful people, and I enjoyed listening to their stories of their extensive travels. It was their interest in the world that led them to support the Spurlock and its mission. Ross and Helen have left a lasting legacy in the Museum that will introduce generations of Illinoisans to the extraordinary diversity of our world and help them gain a greater understanding of our human family. May Ross rest in peace.



Helen and H. Ross Workman in front of the Ancient Mediterranean Gallery at the Museum's opening in 2002.

## THIS JUST IN!

**We are very pleased** to introduce to you our new Director of Education, Dr. Elisabeth Stone. She joins us from New Mexico, where she most recently served as the Curator of Education at the Las Cruces Museum System: Branigan Cultural Center. She is an accomplished cultural educator, program evaluator, grant writer, author, exhibit curator, and university professor.

This summer, the Spurlock Museum received donations of two new scanners. Both scanners were funded through gifts from generous Spurlock Museum Board members. These new machines will be used to digitize papers, photographs, slides, and negatives. With two new scanning stations now up and running, multiple staffers will be able to work together to tackle large digitization projects. This equipment upgrade will allow us to scan at higher resolution, helping to ensure that the scans we create today will hold up to digitization and publications standards into the future.

Recently retired Director of Education Tandy Lacy received a grant of \$7,300 from the Ethnic and Folk Arts Program of the Illinois Arts Council Agency in support of performance events and special programs featuring guest artists from around the world.

Glued to your phone? Follow our new Instagram account @spurlockmuseum. That's our handle on Twitter and Facebook too.





# Educator Julia Robinson Retires

by  
Beth Watkins



In the fall of 2003, Julia Robinson joined the Spurlock Education staff after many years as an art teacher in the Champaign public schools. She brought with her a valuable skill set in working with elementary-age children, a background in anthropology and art education, and a love of experiencing cultures through hands-on projects.

One of her first innovations at Spurlock was Around the World Wednesdays (AWW), a weekly program for young children and their caregivers. As a parent herself, Julia had noticed other museums advertising drop-in opportunities for families and understood the benefit for busy families of not having to commit to a whole series or even to just one specific day. She also thought that that structure might be a way to serve home school families; in the first year of the Museum being open in the new building, the large public school classes had kept staff so busy that there had not yet been any chance to develop something specifically for that smaller but key demographic of museum-goers. The Museum

was a great place for this former classroom teacher to create a more informal learning environment. “When

I was a stay-at-home parent, I appreciated opportunities to do something *with* kids that wasn't just *for* kids. Parents also get to meet each other at programs like this, especially folks who

are new to town or are in small educational communities,” she adds. “We promoted the program with the phrase ‘Parents and kids: create and play together.’ That word ‘together’ was important.”

Anyone who walked into the Zahn Learning Center (ZLC) for one of her school offerings saw that it was organized, inviting, and staffed by welcoming, helpful people. The craft component of a program is maybe half an hour for the visitor, but that does not reflect research and development, purchasing, setup, and cleanup. Research and development was especially complicated because each project must meet educational goals as well as working within the pragmatics required by Museum facilities, the time available, the age of visitors, etc. It's often easy to find far more information than there is ever time to present, and Julia had to boil her copious notes down into just a few minutes of an introductory presentation and hand-outs for adults to read with kids. Tweaking projects with feedback from teachers, parents, and kids is an essential part of this process, and many of the offerings changed over the years as Julia learned what worked well—and what didn't.

Preparing hands-on projects also involved the complex process of procurement and organization of supplies. “Purchasing, stocking, sorting, grouping...fortunately I love to organize!” says Julia. She integrated these steps with the daily routines of student staff, who were essential to the smooth running of public and school programs. The Zahn Learning Center, which hosts most of these activities, is in high demand for many other Museum functions: researching and packing the collection of teaching artifacts, displaying artifacts for a University class visit, serving as a green room space for performers at events, and hosting weekend workshops.

An important feature of Learning Center programming is creating opportunities for kids and their adults to explore and learn together.



Making Mardi Gras masks at Around the World Wednesdays.



Left: Teaching area elementary students in the Asia gallery.

Julia's rigorous organization of materials into labeled bins meant that everyone in the Education section knows exactly where to find whatever they need.

In addition to teaching children of all ages, Julia also supervised many undergraduate student workers. "Student supervision was always a real pleasure. They had so many different personalities and strengths, and I loved watching them develop in their years with us. Our students have done a lot of craft development on their own." Students also helped create the instructional materials that accompany most of the Museum's craft projects. A parent told us how useful it would be to have an overview of the instructions on the table where the crafters work that they can refer to if Julia and other staff were helping another visitor, and Julia made sure to offer these resources for as many activities as possible. She also tried to provide resources for extending the Museum experience by linking the topic or lesson to artifacts on display or activities like a recipe or story that the visitors could enjoy at home. Understanding the importance of connecting the Museum to the wider Champaign-Urbana community, Julia also began organizing presentations and performances to accompany Around the World Wednesdays. She brought in local organizations to share their expertise, including University student organizations specializing in dance and music from many parts of the world.

One of Julia's favorite programs has been our popular school program Cultures of the Past (CoP), in which students choose from a wide selection of gallery-based activities about the ancient cultures of China, Egypt, Greece, Mesopotamia, and Rome. "I love introducing the activities in CoP to students in ways that I hope will hook their interest," says Julia. "If you're a poet, try this. Or if you think poetry is hard, give yourself a challenge!" CoP is the result of years of collaboration between Spurlock and area school teachers and students, plus their volunteer parent chaperones. It has benefitted from a lot of informed trial and error based on staff observations and feedback from participants. "I liked that we developed and implemented CoP continually. You can put your own twist on it. You can emphasize something different that interests you or in response to what students ask or express interest in. It's important to get to make your work fresh and personally satisfying. If you feel engaged, the visitors pick up on that." Similarly, in the past year, Julia took on the challenge of developing a gallery-based program for the Champaign School District first graders and their curriculum on celebrations.

When asked about her favorite exhibits at Spurlock, Julia had a quick answer: "*Luxurious Layers: Kimonos of the Heian Court*. It was up when I joined the staff!



Top: The community ofrenda in the *Day of the Dead* exhibit.



Right: A young artist at Around the World Wednesdays shows his work inspired by Arctic landscapes during the *North of the Northern Lights* exhibit.

I've always been interested in Japan, so that was a great coincidence. There I was in a brand-new position with a wide-open job description, and I will never forget saying "Why don't we try bringing classes in for a multi-station program moving through the exhibits and ZLC" and the next day there was a flyer advertising it! It was so satisfying. The layered paper kimono project came out of looking at the artifacts." Another exhibit that worked really well for young audiences was *A Celebration of Souls: Day of the Dead in Southern Mexico*. Many school groups came in and contributed to what was on display by adding items to the community ofrenda (an altar set up at Day of the Dead with photographs and favorite items and foods of the deceased to welcome the return of their spirits). For the *Paper Trail* exhibit, Julia found so many paper-based projects she wanted to do that she couldn't get to them all while the exhibit was up. Her programs have always been inspired by a mix of the temporary exhibits and the cultures and themes covered in our permanent galleries—which is a huge range to choose from!

You might think that thousands of children with markers and glue in a museum might mean that Julia has seen her share of craft disasters. "Actually, no," she laughs, "but unexpected things could and did happen at any time. Sometimes just the population coming in the door is unpredictable! In AWW one year, we suddenly had a lot of 3-year-olds, but then that pattern never repeated in the same proportions." Fortunately, all of her careful preparation meant that Julia was always ready to respond to visitor needs, no matter what happened. This includes pulling out unanticipated supplies to support whatever direction program participants wanted to take their projects. That is one of the most important goals Julia set for herself: "I always tell kids 'You're the artist!' I want people to walk away thinking that Spurlock is a wonderful place to go. That's all I need. We don't need to cram information into people's heads. We want to help people get interested and then engage with a variety of resources and experiences about whatever inspires them."



Working with visitors at Around the World Wednesdays.



# Wayne's

**A**fter nine years behind his book-covered desk in the Director's office, Professor Wayne Pitard is retiring. But even during his tenure at the Museum, you would rarely have found him sitting still in that office. Instead, he was leading tours, taking intricate digital images of ancient carved pieces in the Artifact Imaging Center, encouraging faculty across campus to use the Museum, and traveling in the U.S. and around the world. He used his travels to talk about his research on our collections and promote opportunities for collaborations. As he began to make his final to-do lists, Wayne talked with Spurlock Magazine Editor Beth Watkins.

**Beth Watkins:** One of your priorities as director has been to make new connections with scholars on campus. Your experience as a long-time faculty member allowed us to serve them in ways that suit their needs. Have there been any unexpected results?

**Wayne Pitard:** From campus, I was particularly pleased with the Department of Dance bringing over students to look at our collection of Native American dance paraphernalia. I was glad they found the collections. We've recently pulled in units that haven't had extensive ties with us. Currently more than 50 University units are actively using us.

**BW:** Because of your own academic and teaching background, you've talked to church groups studying the history of the Bible. You've visited several adult classes, then brought those students to the Museum.

**WP:** For the Hebrew Bible courses in the Department of Religion, I've taken them on tours of artifacts related to the Bible. They appear in several of our exhibits, because we cover several of the cultures that are the context for biblical history and early Christianity. A seminary from Arkansas came to see our fragment of the Book of James! Only three early fragments from the New Testament are in the United States, and ours is the only one regularly on display.

**BW:** What do you think that seeing three-dimensional artifacts means to students?

**WP:** There's no substitute for the real things. No matter how good 2-D representations of artifacts become, no matter how big the screen or high the resolution, there's nothing like standing in front of an artifact. Move an inch and see how an object changes, providing new drama. Adults know this. That's why museums will never be completely replaced by virtual reality collections.

In the spring, we had a lecture on the Parthenon frieze that included lots of images, and then we went into the gallery to see the three-dimensional casts, and that clearly inspired the expert speaker as well as the visitors.

**BW:** You're not just retiring from the Museum. You're retiring from the University after a long career. Can you share other experiences from working on campus?

**WP:** The Department of Religion has been a spectacularly good home for me. The Department continues to have a positive reputation on campus being easy to get along with and contributing effectively in collaborative projects.

**BW:** You were chair when we asked you to work on the Mesopotamia exhibit for the new Spurlock building! Your exhibit was the prototype for developing the process of how the Museum staff would work with the company we hired to actually produce and install the cases and labels. You also guided how materials would be sent back and forth, commented upon, and turned into designs.

**WP:** The hardest part was actually getting used to the fact that my prose was too long for an exhibit. Tandy Lacy and Kim Sheahan [from the Museum's Education Section] were both gentle and serious in making my ideas work in a three-dimensional space for a general audience.

I was the first Ancient Near East scholar at the University since 1929, so there was a lot of work to be done on our Babylonian tablets. I loved discovering fascinating pieces. For example, there's a traveler's itinerary of a trip from Larsa in southern Iraq to northern Syria and back. It's important for historical geographers and tells them where some of these ancient sites are located.

**BW:** You have a few long-term projects still in place, such as serving as curator for our exhibit next fall on the University's sesquicentennial. What else would you like to ensure is in motion before you leave?

**WP:** I'm interested in trying to get a better representation of Hinduism into the permanent galleries. We have Balinese Hinduism represented. But because we had so few artifacts from India when the galleries were designed, Indian Hinduism is not. I'd also like to work with Native American House



Floor Panel from Akhenaten's Palace, 1923.02.0001.

# World



## An Interview with Retiring Museum Director Wayne Pitard



to replace some of the images in the North American exhibit to reflect contemporary Illinois peoples.

As for big changes, we've been discussing ways to redevelop the entire Egyptian exhibit. We'd like to incorporate our artifacts from Greco-Roman Egypt, which will provide even better context for our mummy (from

ca. 100 CE). I'm interested in collaborating with the Kelsey Museum at the University of Michigan because of their work at Karanis, a settlement founded in the 3rd century BCE by the Greeks, about 40 miles southwest of Cairo on the west side of the Nile. I also want to tell more of the Amarna story, using our painted floor panel from the Maru-Aten sanctuary and images of pharaohs Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and Tutankhamun.

But we won't get rid of our classical Egypt pieces, since those are so well-known and popular.

**BW: I hope we could put back in some representation of predynastic Egypt, since those pieces were taken out when we installed the interactive on Mesopotamian cylinder seals. It's an interesting story, telling the origins of the indelible, iconic features of ancient Egyptian culture, and hardly anyone knows about it. As someone who has had a career in education of ancient cultures, what is it about Egypt that you think people respond to so strongly?**

**WP:** One is its extraordinary antiquity. The Greeks themselves were fascinated by Egypt because it was so ancient. The stone wonders survived, even though the Egyptians didn't develop enduring literature. From the dawn of history, the pyramids have always been astonishing. Egyptians' preservation of the dead is also completely unique, especially with its detail and elaboration. No one does tombs better. The hieroglyphic script was seen as magical, even by some Egyptians themselves. When carving words into the tomb walls, they would sometimes cut off heads of the animal-shaped marks so that those animals couldn't come alive and attack the mummy in the tomb! Even in ancient times, Egypt was unfathomably old and monumental: the dawn of civilization.

**BW: You've got some ongoing research projects too, right?**

**WP:** Yes, I'd like to finish up my publication on our cylinder seals, and I'd like to write up the Amarna floor panel, too. We've had a few graduate students from the Oriental Institute who have expressed

interest in publishing the Kültepe triple goddess figurine, which hasn't been analyzed in print since 1924! And I want to write up a thorough history of Spurlock and its ancestor museums.

**BW: Will retirement provide more uninterrupted work time for things like researching and writing?**



Wayne teaching students to write cuneiform.

**WP:** As director, I get distracted from big projects, but it is rare that the distraction is something I don't want to do. For example, right now I'm writing an introduction to a traveling exhibit on Chinese Buddhist caves, which is not an area I previously knew much about. I've been pulled into many projects as director, like researching the early history of the transistor, the beginnings of Chinese student exchange at the University, our wonderful collection of Greek papyrus fragments, and the history of museums on campus. For the last years of my career, it's been like being allowed into the candy store. And I feel good about where the Museum is now as a whole, its reputation and its stature on campus.

**BW: You have done a lot to fill in the blanks in people's minds about the Museum, both on campus and in the community at large.**

**WP:** It's important for the administration and community to know who we are. They can't value us if they don't know what we do.

I think the next director will find us in good shape and making real contributions to the University and to the citizens of Illinois. And I love having watched people get excited about the Museum. Spending time with people in the galleries is such a delight.

This has been a wonderful experience, and it will be hard to leave.



Figurine of Three Goddesses, 1900.53.0153.

# SPURLOCK MUSEUM Events

## FALL 2016 &

To add your name to our events email list, please contact Karen Flesher at [kflesher@illinois.edu](mailto:kflesher@illinois.edu).

To request disability-related accommodations for these events, please contact Brian Cudiamat at (217) 333-0889 or [cudiamat@illinois.edu](mailto:cudiamat@illinois.edu).

This publication may be obtained in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Beth Watkins at (217) 265-5485 or [ewatkins@illinois.edu](mailto:ewatkins@illinois.edu).

## CAMPBELL GALLERY EXHIBIT AND RELATED EVENTS

*The Spurlock Museum's changing exhibits are made possible through a gift from Allan C. and Marlene S. Campbell.*

### **Medieval Irish Masterpieces in Modern Reproduction**

September 13, 2016–April 2, 2017

In 1916, the U of I Museum of European History acquired a remarkable set of high-quality reproductions of major monuments of early Irish metalwork art, including the Tara Brooch, Ardagh Chalice, the Cross of Cong, and the shrine of St. Lachtin's arm. These superb pieces were part of a larger collection created in very small numbers by the Dublin jeweler Edmond Johnson for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. They are important not only as museum-quality reproductions but also in their own right as specimens of the art of the Celtic Revival and of modern "medievalism." In this exhibit, this collection is displayed alongside nineteenth- and twentieth-century facsimiles of illuminated Irish vernacular and Latin manuscripts on loan from the U of I Library—works that have been fundamental to scholarship on medieval Irish studies in the past century and a half.

### **Curator-led tours of Medieval Irish Masterpieces in Modern Reproduction**

Saturday, December 3, 2016 • 2 p.m.

Sunday, March 5, 2017 • 2 p.m.

Exhibit curator Professor Charles Wright will lead public tours of this special exhibit. Contact Kim Sheahan at [ksheahan@illinois.edu](mailto:ksheahan@illinois.edu) to reserve your attendance. The group size is limited.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### **AsiaLENS: AEMS Documentary Film and Discussion Series at the Spurlock Museum**

Fall dates: September 20, October 18, and November 15, 2016.

Spring dates: February 14, March 14, and April 11, 2017.

All screenings begin at 7 p.m.

This series of public film screenings and lecture/discussion programs is organized by the Asian Educational Media Service (AEMS) at the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies. It is planned in collaboration with the Spurlock Museum and presented in the Knight Auditorium. Guest scholars and members of the campus and local communities will introduce the films and lead post-screening audience discussions.

Check the Museum's calendar of events for individual film confirmations and [aems.illinois.edu](http://aems.illinois.edu) for descriptions and trailers. *Free admission.*

# SPRING 2017

## Zahn Learning Center Open Hours

Saturdays, October 1 through December 10, 2016 • 1–4 p.m.

During ZLC OH on Saturday afternoons, visitors can create crafts inspired by special exhibits, cultural holidays, current events, and Spurlock's feature gallery collections. Ideal for elementary age students and older, ZLC OH aims to help visitors explore world cultures by making crafts and spending hands-on time with objects from the Museum's Teaching Collection. Programming for the fall will include Irish crafts, Day of the Dead, Diwali, and more. See the Spurlock Museum online calendar of events or Facebook page for specific details.

*Admission: \$2 per crafter.*

## Mindful Meditation Series

Fridays, October 21 through December 16, 2016

*(except Thanksgiving week)*

11:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. in the Knight Auditorium

It's the fifth anniversary of free mindful meditation practice at Spurlock. If you've heard good things about the benefits of mindfulness and have been wanting to learn more, this series offers a start. During each 30-minute session, Mary Wolters of Green Yoga Spa will help participants bring a focus to their breathing and share tips for how to engage mindfully. No registration or special equipment is necessary, and participants may attend as many or few sessions as they like.

*Free admission.*

## Archaeological Institute of America Lecture Series

These talks are organized by the Central Illinois Society of the Archaeological Institute of America and hosted by the Spurlock Museum. Visit [archaeological.org/societies/centralillinoisurbana](http://archaeological.org/societies/centralillinoisurbana) or contact Jane Goldberg at [jgoldber@illinois.edu](mailto:jgoldber@illinois.edu) for more information. All lectures are located in the Knight Auditorium.

*Free admission.*

- Sunday, October 23, 2016 • 3 p.m.  
*Egypt's Desert Frontier: The Ptolemaic Fortress at Bir Samut* by Jennifer E. Gates-Foster, University of California, Berkeley
- Sunday, April 9, 2017 • 3 p.m.  
*Nemea and the Pan-Hellenic Sanctuary of Zeus* by Kim Shelton, University of California at Berkeley

## Ghost Stories

Saturday, October 29, 2016

Two ghost story concerts for Halloween will feature members of the C-U Storytelling Guild, including local favorites Dan Keding and Kim Sheahan. All donations and admission fees will support the Museum's educational programs.

- *Gruesome, Gory, and Ghastly Ghosts and Ghouls*  
2–3:30 p.m.

This afternoon family event will feature multicultural ghost stories told in the Museum's Auditorium. The stories will be most appropriate for children grades K–6. The children will leave with bags of candy to start their trick-or-treating off right.

*Suggested donation: \$5.*

- *Stories from the Other Side*

7:30–9 p.m.

This ghost story concert features tales with adult themes or heightened fear factors. It is for adults only (age 16 and above).

*Admission: \$8 adults, \$6 students.*

## Silly Stories Afternoon

Saturday, December 10, 2016 • 2–3 p.m.

Join resident storyteller Kim Sheahan for a family concert of folktales that will put a smile on your face.

*Free admission.*

## Stories to Warm Your Heart

Saturday, January 7, 2017 • 2–3 p.m.

Throw off the winter chill with a family storytelling concert by resident storyteller Kim Sheahan.

*Free admission.*

## Winter Tales

Saturday, February 18, 2017 • 2–3:30 p.m.

Join us for one of the Museum's most popular annual events, a concert of American Indian tales, told during the winter months, the traditional time of telling. Winter Tales concerts are sponsored by an endowment from Reginald and Gladys Laubin.

*Admission: \$5.*

## Spurlock Museum WorldFest

Saturday, April 1, 2017 • 12:30–4 p.m.

A whole afternoon of performances! During WorldFest, the Museum celebrates the wonderful variety of performance arts practiced around the world and offers hands-on activities for everyone.

*Suggested donation: \$5.*

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