

**ELEVATING COMMUNITIES**

The Kentucky Museum seeks **\$5,000,000** to grow the **Kentucky Museum Endowment** to ensure the preservation and accessibility of our collections in perpetuity.



Project Description

The Kentucky Museum’s collection is more than cabinets of artifacts; it is a gateway to items treasured over an individual’s lifetime and representative of Southcentral Kentucky’s communal heritage. Our holdings consist of approximately 30,000 artifacts that document the history and cultural heritage of Kentucky. Collections strengths include historic clothing and textiles, especially quilts; fine, folk, and decorative arts; toys and games; and political memorabilia. Of special note is our quilt collection, which consists of nearly 250 examples dating from 1810 through 2000. These quilts showcase the depth and breadth of creativity and expression in Kentucky, especially how people (primarily women) create social and/or physical connections with one another. Nearly all of our exhibitions and educational programs are built around this collection, and the museum provides WKU classes and students access through class-based assignments, closed study collections, traveling trunks, and independent study projects.

Our collection has resulted in significant opportunities for use by scholars, ranging from loans to museums such as the Brooklyn Museum, Smithsonian Institution of American History, and Belle Meade Plantation to various publications and popular media. Our collections have appeared in *Drinks, Crime, and Prohibition* (Smithsonian Channel) and the *Secret Life of Cakes* (Food Network) as well as PBS programming including Ken Burns’ and Lynn Novick’s documentary series, *Prohibition; Why Quilts Matter: History, Art, & Politics*; and *Andrew Jackson: Good, Evil and the Presidency*. Images from our collections have also appeared on the websites of National Public Radio, FindaGrave, H-Kentucky, Pinnacle Foods, Lincoln’s Cottage at the National Soldier’s Home, Civil War Digest, and Humanities and Social Sciences Online. Finally, our collections have been used in a variety of print publications, including *Images of America Series: Introducing Folk Music*; biographies of Josie Underwood and Marie Prescott; *Cutouts of Fashion*; *Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900*; *A Thread of Evidence: Shaker Textile Industries at South Union*; and *The Paper Doll, a Collector’s Guide*.

In 2017, the Kentucky Museum developed a Strategic Plan for Collections that incorporates assessment, digitization, and expansion of our collections program. Built around the creation of a new Collections suite and improvements to the preservation environment, the plan has been shared with the upper level of WKU Administration but was put on hold due to fiscal realities.



Now, the Kentucky Museum seeks to establish an endowed fund to preserve our collections in perpetuity, thus ensuring our collections' longevity and accessibility for the public. This includes consultations and services by experts in the conservation field, upgrades to and expansion of our in-house collections storage systems, digitization of our collections, and acquiring supplies and related services that will provide a better long-term environment for and access to our collections. Through these efforts, we will better preserve and interpret our collections for the public while fulfilling our mission as an active teaching and learning resource.

### Special Consideration

The Kentucky Museum seeks \$5,000,000 to bolster the Kentucky Museum Endowment for conservation and preservation costs incurred in future years. This would provide approximately \$175,000 per year to conserve, protect, and display our collections.

We seek to establish the fund as soon as possible, in order to begin meeting critical needs established by 2017 conservation and environmental assessments. These assessments revealed that nearly all of the museums' spaces require humidification equipment and passive equipment to create acceptable preservation environments that meet the comfort needs of our visitors. Through funding from the endowment, the Kentucky Museum will be better positioned to apply for and match grants that enable us to renovate and/or refurbish our collections systems and equipment, while bringing in professional conservationists to clean, protect, and advise on the care of our collections.

### Sponsor Benefits (\$5,000,000)

- Name on the endowed fund.
- Lifetime membership to the Kentucky Museum.
- Opportunity to meet with Collections Curator and/or receive annual correspondence about the impact of your gift.
- Custom recognition package, developed in consultation with WKU Foundation.