

*INSPIRE INNOVATION*

## Curatorial Fund for Excellence

The Kentucky Museum seeks **\$2,500,000** to recruit and retain an Endowed Curator position.



### Project Description

Curators are a vital position in every museum. Often working behind-the-scenes, curators greatly influence what the public sees and learns in the museum, as well as the outcomes of student learning in museum spaces. Coming from the Latin word ‘curare’ (meaning ‘to take care’), curators are responsible for a myriad of efforts that coalesce into four primary areas:

1. Preservation – safeguarding the heritage of their museum’s community;
2. Deciphering – researching and documenting community heritage, in collaboration with scholars and students, for future generations;
3. Presentation – providing trustworthy research, documentation, and public presentation of knowledge regarding the community’s heritage; and
4. Connection – providing spaces and doorways for the public to connect with heritage, each other, their communities, and the larger world through dialogue and education.

In 2017, the Kentucky Museum’s long-time curator retired. Now, the museum is seeking funds to establish a permanent source of support for the Curator position. This Fund will ensure that the Kentucky Museum can hire and retain a Curator who provides expertise to fulfill the museum’s mission while helping the museum break new ground in scholarship, programming, and active learning. The Fund will support the recruitment, hiring, and retaining of the Curator as well as funds for ongoing professional development to foster innovation and excellence in curatorial practice.

Through innovative excellence, the Kentucky Museum will achieve two goals central to the positioning of the museum and WKU as a community asset. First, curatorial innovation leads to the creation of new public exhibitions and programs for the Commonwealth, bringing in the latest technologies and interpretation methods to research, present, and discuss Kentucky’s heritage and global connections. Second, the Kentucky Museum will become a destination for



emerging scholars and artists to contribute to the region's heritage, learn best practices in museum interpretation and curatorial practice, investigate and document new ideas in their fields, and contribute to the student-centered and applied learning methodologies central to WKU's mission and vision.

### Special Consideration

A commitment to support the Fund for Curatorial Excellence, whether through a one-time donation or a multi-year commitment, is necessary. According to WKU policy, the annual distribution of an endowment is 3.5%. A \$3 million endowment will enable the museum to provide approximately \$105,000 per year to support:

- Competitive salary and benefits for a full-time, 12-month Curator position;
- Professional development for the Curator; and
- Expected salary increases per University policy and/or student internships or graduate assistantships mentored by the Curator, at the Museum Director's discretion.

### Timeline

We are seeking to have the Fund established and funded as soon as possible. Currently, the Kentucky Museum is operating without a Curator, which has stalled the museum's efforts to attain American Alliance of Museums accreditation. Such accreditation provides national recognition of the museum's commitment to excellence and highest professional standards, an increased positive public image, increased credibility with funding agencies and donors, and fulfillment of our public trust obligations. Accreditation also enables the museum to improve our relationships with current and potential stakeholders and partners, foster organizational development and improvement, and reduce our risk ratings from insurers.

### Sponsor Benefits

- Positioning as a community leader in and supporter of arts and cultural heritage.
- Lifetime membership as a Friend of the Kentucky Museum.
- Named position at WKU, with name/logo on signage related to Curator position.
- Name/logo included in television PSAs, radio PSAs, interviews, and articles associated with the Fund.
- Opportunity to have a promotional area within the Museum for brochures, etc.
- Other possible advertising opportunities, as determined in consultation with the WKU Foundation and KM Director.