Letter from the President

You’re a child who has spent your entire life in the city. On a tour of the museum with your classmates, you travel back to the dawn of civilization in Africa, cross the Atlantic Ocean to witness religious traditions in Brazil, and learn about ingenious scientific advances made by African Americans – and careers you might pursue today. Your world has been enlarged beyond your wildest imaginings, and now you think, “What if?”

So begins our most recent fundraising appeal, with a story representing one of the thousands of experiences engendered by the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. Where else can one travel from prehistoric Africa to the present, enjoy the beauty of art from around the world, be transported by the words and voices of writers and poets to places you’ve never visited, and follow ancestral pathways to freedom, all without ever leaving Detroit? The Wright Museum is where these journeys happen every day, for visitors from all walks of life – young and old, black and white, city resident and suburbanite. For many who have never ventured outside of the metropolitan region, especially children, these experiences empower their dreams and expand their world views.

At our 2013 Annual Meeting held December 5, we took a look back at the many accomplishments of the past year:

- Partnering with more than 100 organizations including universities, cultural institutions, governmental bodies, and major media outlets to present over 200 public programs and events
- Presenting 14 exhibitions including the museum’s latest long-term installation, *Inspiring Minds: African Americans in Science and Technology*, and the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded *Bandits & Heroes, Poets & Saints: Popular Art of the Northeast of Brazil* exhibit
- Hosting and participating in an array of education-focused efforts including NBC News’ Education Nation tour, Lawrence Technological University’s Robofest competition, and the Literacy: *We Are The Change Summit Conference*

Speaking of journeys, on December 5 we learned that the *Bandits & Heroes* exhibit has been selected for the NEH on the Road program and will travel the country for the next 5 years. We congratulate exhibit organizers Barb Cervenka and Mame Jackson of Con/Vida – Popular Arts of the Americas, and look forward to continuing this unique partnership as its journey continues!

Whether it’s to Ghana, the Underground Railroad, or to witness the artistry of on-stage performances, experiences like these mirror the internal journeys we make as human beings, of, and to, understanding, compassion, and unity. Ultimately, this most important journey takes place within us all – from the mind, to the heart, and finally, the soul. The Wright Museum is where these journeys happen, and will continue to, as it heads towards its 50th anniversary in 2015, and beyond.

Harold Varner

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Harold Varner of Sims Varner & Associates, the architectural firm responsible for our magnificent building, as well as other significant structures around the country. The museum hosted a memorial service for Mr. Varner on December 23. The love and pride he felt for this edifice will continue to be felt by all who enter.

Juanita Moore, President & CEO

January 2014
Recent Events

Photos by Annistique Photography
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To view full photo galleries of recent events please visit Thewright.org/photos

The Underground Railroad & Legacy of Black Resistance: Sunday, November 10

Sean Blackman’s In Transit Afro Brazilian Concert: Saturday, November 16

41st Annual Noel Night: Saturday, December 7

Detroit Tribute to President Nelson Mandela: Saturday, December 14
On the morning of November 14, 2013, scholars and community leaders came together for the Literacy: We Are The Change summit conference at The Wright Museum. Their mission: the eradication of illiteracy in Detroit. Organized in partnership with Beyond Basics, a local nonprofit providing schools with literacy-focused tutoring and supplemental programs since 2002, and made possible by the support of Quicken Loans, the conference was crafted to foster communication and build relationships across groups working to address this most pressing issue.

In a gesture ripe with symbolic significance, Beyond Basics executive director Pam Good took the opportunity to present a signed copy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s 1964 book, *Why We Can’t Wait*, to museum president & CEO Juanita Moore in appreciation for the museum’s partnership. Plenary speakers for the event were Martín Gómez, former head of the Los Angeles Public Library system, the largest public library system in the United States; also, past President of the Urban Libraries Council and current Vice Dean of the University of Southern California (USC) Libraries; and Carol Goss, President of The Skillman Foundation. Gómez focused on how crucial literacy is in a world where technology is becoming more ingrained in everyday life and learning. Goss touched on many issues, all based on her many years of dedicated service to the Detroit community. “Accountability, parent access, school performance, strong leadership […] all are needed for success.”

For two panel discussions, representatives attended from Beyond Basics, Brightmoor Alliance, Cranbrook Schools Horizons-Upward Bound, Detroit 90/90, Detroit Public Schools Foundation, Detroit Regional Chamber, Michigan Future Inc., Reading Works, and United Way for Southeastern Michigan. WXYZ Channel 7 Anchor Vic Faust and Detroit Free Press writer Rochelle Riley served as moderators. Myriad issues were raised, from the economic impact of illiteracy to the self-fulfillment children have when pushed to achieve more than the baseline standard of education. “Our kids have to believe there’s a better world out there,” stated Dr. Darryl Taylor of Cranbrook Schools Horizons-Upward Bound. Perhaps one of the most provocative insights was that of Kirk Mayes, executive director of Brightmoor Alliance, who interjected that illiteracy was not simply an educational or economic issue, but in the face of increasing global competition, a national security issue.

As the morning came to a close, there was the sense that the journey towards literacy would be long and hard, but would ultimately lead to a better world for the future: the children in our community. This partnership between Beyond Basics and The Wright Museum was but one more step in that direction.

The museum offers its free Don Barden Foundation Interactive Storytime reading program every second Sunday of the month at 2 pm, just one of its many literacy-related efforts taking place in 2014. For more information visit TheWright.org. For more information on Beyond Basics and its work, visit www.beyondbasics.org.
Science, Technology, Engineering, (Arts), and Mathematics programming continues to expand

Where will the next great discovery in science come from? Will it be from a chemist's laboratory, an inventor's notebook, a biologist's microscope, or an engineer's blueprints? These are just tools – it is the people who work with them that innovate and develop ideas, bringing the imagined into reality. The minds of these people were shaped while young to learn and appreciate scientific development. All too often, though, children in our community are unaware of the historic contributions of African Americans to the collective STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. By hosting more STEM-related programming, The Wright Museum's goal is to make sure every child who comes through our doors is aware of the greatness they can achieve.

In November 2012, the museum opened its latest ongoing exhibition, Inspiring Minds: African Americans in Science and Technology. Specifically designed for children, Inspiring Minds explores the fields of biology, aeronautics, medicine, and engineering by way of hands-on activities and vignettes about distinguished practitioners, past and present. Since opening, Inspiring Minds has been one of the museum's most popular attractions, and for good reason. Whether they're interacting with the touch-screen video wall or learning about George Washington Carver's work, children discover a wealth of information and any number of interesting and attainable career paths to be explored. In conjunction with the exhibit, Meet the Scientist Saturdays take place monthly and allow children the opportunity to learn about historical trailblazers, or hear from contemporaries, who have made their mark in the STEM fields.

Inspiring Minds will get kids thinking, but what is the next step? How do they begin to apply themselves? The Wright Museum has partnered with the renowned DAPCEP (Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program) to host The Little Engineer That Could, a program for young children and their parents. Once a kindergarten- or 1st grade-ready child is selected, the child and their parental figures participate in five three-hour sessions during spring and fall, for three years. Additionally, the parent participates in weekly training sessions to help them understand the material and be empowered to assist in the Saturday workshops. These workshops, lead by DAPCEP instructors, teach the basic principles of math, science, pre-engineering and reading through lessons and building projects.

The Little Engineer That Could is a great starting point, but the STEM bug may bite, and the child want more. How about robotics? The Wright Museum has served as host to a trio of Robofest events, with a fourth coming in Spring 2014. Presented by Lawrence Technological University, Robofest is a series of competitions with autonomous robots – programmed to act independently without remote-control – that encourage students to have fun while learning principles of physical science, computer science, technology, engineering, and math. Teams of students, ranging from 4th to 12 grade and from all over the world, participate in a variety of challenges by constructing robots to meet their goals. Throughtout, they learn fundamentals of both STEM and teamwork.

The Wright Museum's expansion of STEM-related offerings, in conjunction with its ongoing arts programming, will continue to gain STE(A)M in 2014 as it propels young people towards discovery, inspiration, and ultimately, the realization of their dreams!

For more information on Inspiring Minds: African Americans in Science and Technology, please visit www.InspiringMindsOnline.com. For more information on The Little Engineer That Could, please visit www.dapcep.org. For more information on Robofest, please visit www.robofest.net.
Point of View: African American Masters from the Elliot & Kimberly Perry Collection

Famed collection goes on display simultaneously at The Wright Museum and Flint Institute of Arts

Point of View: African American Masters from the Elliot and Kimberly Perry Collection – the Detroit exhibition

Point of View: Contemporary African American Art from the Elliot and Kimberly Perry Collection – the Flint exhibition

Point of View: African American Art from the Elliot and Kimberly Perry Collection – the Catalogue title

The Wright Museum will feature works by modern masters such as Henry Ossawa Tanner, Eldzier Cortor, Elizabeth Catlett, James Van Der Zee, and many others. In correlation with “Masterworks,” the catalogue essay written by Jacqueline Francis, Ph.D., the exhibition will be divided into three sections: “The 'New Negro' Artists,” “The “Negro Renaissance” Generation,” and “Realism and New Realities.”

Francis provides a chronology of the works in the collection, and presents exciting points of view seldom discussed about African American art and culture. For example, few people are aware that what became known as the Harlem Renaissance was first called “the Negro Renaissance.”

Francis also notes that African Americans have always created works in many genres ranging from realism and abstract paintings, to photography, sculpture and much more. The Perry's collection provides an opportunity for that instructive perspective.

In her essay, Francis reveals another seldom discussed reality – that African Americans are benefactors of the arts. She writes, “The Elliot and Kimberly Perry Collection reflects the vision of patrons committed to sharing the rich history and expressive culture of African Americans with the general public.” While this statement is certainly true about the Perry’s, it is also true about African Americans who support the arts by purchasing works and exhibiting them in their homes and cultural institutions, where viewers who may not have the means to collect such works can be exposed to and enjoy them.

Elliot Perry, a former professional basketball player and Memphis native, started to collect mid-to late 20th century African American art with his wife Kimberly in 1996. Perry has said that his passion for art now rivals his love for basketball. He credits Walter Evans and Darrell Walker with inspiring him to become a collector. For each of these men, collecting works of art is more than just accumulating random pieces; their objective is focused on preserving slices of African American history and culture through the arts.

Contemporary works from the Perry Collection will be on display at the Flint Institute of Arts (www.flintarts.org) during the same time that the modern masterworks are on view at The Wright Museum. This collaboration will allow visitors to see both exhibitions with the purchase of one ticket.

Point of View: African American Masters from the Elliot & Kimberly Perry Collection opens January 20, 2014, and remains on display through April 20. The exhibition is free with museum admission. Purchase of admission to either the Detroit or Flint exhibit entitles purchaser with proof of purchase to admission at the partner institution during the exhibition period. For more information call (313) 494-5800. The exhibit is made possible by the support of the Ford Motor Company Fund, the Kresge Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the women of The Wright Gala host committee.
WINTER 2014

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

UPCOMING EVENTS

Every Sunday at 5 pm: Hustle for History Weekly Dance Lessons ($)
Every Tuesday at 7:30 pm: 30 Days to Lose It! Weekly Workouts ($)
Every Second Sunday from 1 - 5 pm: Charter One Free Family Second Sunday
Every Second Sunday at 2 pm: Don Barden Foundation Interactive Storytime
Every Third Sunday at 4 pm: Association for the Study of African American Life & History (ASALH) Meeting
Every Third Friday at 8 pm: The Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers hosted by Satori Shakoor ($)

Thursday 1/16 at 6 pm: Opening Reception for Works of Art by the Wright Angels
Saturday 1/18 at 2 pm: Liberation Film Series Double Feature: The FBI's War on Black America & Assata Shakur

Monday 1/20 at 8 am: 14th Annual MLK Day Commemorative Breakfast ($)
Featuring Reverend Dr. Carlyle Fielding Stewart III, Senior Pastor, Hope United Methodist Church, and Violinist Daniel Davis performing The Dream Today. Tickets & info at TheWright.org

Monday 1/20 from 9 am - 7 pm: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration
First 100 visitors receive a signed copy of Crusader for Justice: Federal Judge Damon J. Keith w/purchase of museum membership or breakfast ticket. All activities & exhibits included in museum admission

Friday 1/31 at 5:30 pm: Madman or Martyr World Premiere Film Screening & Discussion w/Student Filmmaker Jordan Anderson Writes a Letter (Theatrical Production)
Tuesdays - Fridays, February 4 - March 21, daily performances at 11 am
Written by Dr. Arthur J. Beer and based on actual events, Jordan Anderson Writes a Letter is the story of how one who escaped slavery taught his former captor a lesson in compassion, defiance, and dignity. Performed by the Theatre Company of University of Detroit Mercy. Free with museum admission.

Tuesday 2/4 at 6 pm - 30 Days To Lose It! Matters of the Heart Seminar by the American Heart Association

Sunday February 9 at 3 pm: Praise Song for Mandela ($)
In partnership with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Proceeds benefit the the Adelaide Tambo School for the Physically Challenged in Soweto, South Africa.

Thursday 2/20 at 6 pm: Call Me Kuchu Film Screening & Discussion w/Freedom House & KICK ($)
Saturday 2/22 at 2 pm: Liberation Film Series presents Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice Screening & Discussion

Spirit of Detroit (Theatrical Production)
Friday 2/28 & Saturday 3/1 at 6 pm; Sunday 3/2 at 3 pm
Written by Detroit native Mercilee M. Jenkins, this production is based on the Algiers Motel incident during the 1967 rebellion. Each performance will be followed by a panel discussion and/or talk-back with the playwright and director. Free.

Thursday 3/13 at 6 pm: 2014 African World Festival Community Advisory Meeting

Saturday 3/15 at 7 pm: 5th Annual Black Women Rock! Concert ($)
Sunday 3/16 at 1:30 pm: Black Women Rock They Say I'm Different Artist Discussion
Saturday 3/22 at 2 pm: Liberation Film Series presents Marcus Garvey: Look For Me in the Whirlwind Screening & Discussion

For up-to-date event information visit TheWright.org or call (313) 494-5800
The museum would like to extend its sincere appreciation to those donors who have made gifts to support our exhibits, programming and special events. Listed here are the names of contributors who made gifts of $500 or more. Every attempt has been made to list donors accurately; if there are errors or omissions, please call (313) 494-5872 so we may correct them. Thank you!

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This newsletter and museum programming are made possible by the generous support of our community partners. Thank you! JOIN US! To become a member, make a donation or volunteer, please call (313) 494-5800 or visit TheWright.org.
CURRENT & UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

14th Annual MLK Day Commemorative Breakfast: Monday, January 20 at 8 am

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration: Monday, January 20 from 9 am - 7 pm

And Still We Rise: Our Journey Through African American History and Culture
Ongoing

Inspiring Minds: African Americans in Science and Technology
Ongoing

Point of View: African American Masters from the Elliot & Kimberly Perry Collection
January 20 - April 20, 2014

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Celebrating a Century of Sisterhood, Scholarship & Service Presented by the Detroit Alumnae Chapter
Now - March 31, 2014

Ingrid Saunders Jones: 31 Years of Distinguished Service... and Counting
Now - March 31, 2014

Works of Art by The Wright Angels
Now - March 9, 2014

For more information please call (313) 494-5800 or visit TheWright.org