



2016 Annual Report



OSHKOSH
Public Museum

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The Director's Column

While the length of this year's Annual Report is short, the content is what is important. There have only been a few years when the Museum has packed in so many accomplishments into such a short time.



Standing tallest among the highlights is the elegant and meticulously researched *People of the Waters* long-term exhibition. After four years of work, and with its 800 artifacts and innovative methods that enable visitors to connect with the past, it is garnering much attention near and far. Few exhibitions are as aesthetically pleasing and so beautifully executed.

We also presented *The Voices of Native American Art: Telling Our Story*, a cutting edge exhibition showcasing some of the finest Native art in Wisconsin, from exquisite hand hammered sterling silver to gorgeous beadwork. This art clearly demonstrated that the Native American artistic community in our wonderful state ranks among the best in the nation.

The Museum had a very successful visit by the noted artist and author, Jan Brett, and we launched the World War I Commemorative Committee with its website and public programs. An incredible collection of national significance with the Mears Family materials was acquired this year. The letters, photographs, and documents reveal much about the life of Oshkosh's famous artist and her family.

It is not just the efforts of staff that make all this possible. Rather, it is the *collective work* of our volunteers and the financial support we receive from our members, the Auxiliary, foundations, the community, and from City government. Without this, we cannot continue.

The Oshkosh Public Museum is without question moving in the right direction. There is a strong and growing sense of community pride in the Museum, and I am rewarded and humbled to receive your comments. This pride has also revealed itself in the support we receive from people of all walks of life, people who understand and appreciate that history and art are something to be appreciated, valued, and passed along. I am pleased to guide the Museum through this time of opportunity and challenge.



An Annual Report is both a look back as well as an introduction to what's ahead. We are now working with Split Rock Studios on the next phase of long-term exhibitions in the second floor galleries. Visitors will uncover stories of pioneers, immigrants, and industry through innovative techniques. Hand-in-hand with this big project is a long-needed modification to the Steiger Wing, to be done in two phases. Design development for both projects is planned for 2019.

Every staff member understands that we work for and represent the people. The collections we hold in trust and manage are objects and images that embody the collective memory of the community and its citizens. The Museum will soon enter a new phase of its life. When it does, it will be strong and well positioned to celebrate 100 amazing years of service in 2024.


Brad Larson, Director



“The thoughtful way OPM developed People of the Waters, and the exhibit that resulted--beautifully installed, and full of compelling objects and technology--is a model every museum could learn from.”

-Dennis Kois,
President and CEO
Milwaukee Public Museum

◀ The Museum recently acquired a significant collection of material related to Helen Farnsworth Mears, her sister Mary Mears and the Mears family. Hundreds of pieces, primarily archival in nature, approximately triple the Museum’s archival holdings related to this talented Oshkosh family. This remarkable acquisition allows the Museum to help tell an important story about Oshkosh’s most prominent artist and her family. Photos courtesy of Stanley Bystrowski for Skinner Inc.



▲ Karen Marie Petersen made this quilt about 1914. Then, as now, there is nothing like a thick quilt when the winds of January howl. OPM #2016.51

◀ Wisconsin’s annual November deer hunt is steeped in tradition and history. Before modern fabrics and insulated blaze orange, hunters wore red or red and black checked wool. This jacket was made by the Chippewa Woolen Mills about 1956. OPM #2016.7



◀ Men and women have tried to lure fish to their spears for thousands of years. Fish decoys are both functional and small pieces of art. These seven are part of a collection of fifty-five Wisconsin-made fish decoys. OPM #2016.12

Strength in Numbers

Statement of Revenue and Expenses for the year ending December 31

	2015	2016
Operating Funds		
City Appropriation	863,400	911,700
Admission Fees	149,140	54,425
Gifts and Donations	670	551
Gift Shop and Photograph Sales	56,961	30,139
Miscellaneous Revenue	1,135	0
Transfers In	71,032	72,252
Additional Transfer	51,552	67,867
Total Revenue	1,193,890	1,136,934
Total Expenses	1,075,459	1,086,057
Balance For Fiscal Year	118,431	50,877
Membership Fund	143,617	101,960
Exhibition Fund	7,052	500
Collections Fund	613,546	616,023
Dr. Richard and Jeanne Kitz Director's Fund	263,378	263,453
Lona and Edward G. Kitz Trust Fund	54,025	57,226
William E. Bray Trust Fund	17,436	18,515
Ethel J. Behncke Museum Trust Fund	297,683	296,094
Frederick and Marion Hughes Durow Trust Fund	3,273,000	3,397,969
Dr. Norman Marohn Museum Endowment Trust Fund	108,691	117,009
Capital Fund at the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation	90,371	170,092
Endowment Fund at the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation	267,306	270,864
Collection Fund at the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation	107,536	105,939



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