

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Inspiring Change  
Through the Art of  
Hank Willis Thomas

# CONNECT

# Allow Me to Say, Goodbye but Hello to Future Humanities Events

*Dr. Felicia Petty Smith, Board Chair*



The moment of writing my last article has arrived. Like history, there will always be memories of my experiences and my colleagues' interactions over the past seven years that have extended my knowledge and growth in the humanities.

Museum directors and librarians shared their passion to collect and share history. Professors debated their facts and opinions within their expertise. We are a hardworking board with humanities, education, and nonprofit experiences. Furthermore, we depended on a fantastic Arkansas Humanities Council (AHC) staff to provide their assistance and knowledge. I applaud Jama, Tamisha, and Katie for their hard, dedicated work!

It saddens me to leave the board after this year. Future experts will continue to come. I have my memories. One of the most memorable events for me was when I was presented the 2017 Passing the Torch Legacy of Service Award (by the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Inc. Commission at a Fort Smith event). It totally caught me off guard! Other memorable experiences include learning about the Marshallese culture in Springdale from representatives of the community. Viewing films by our own Arkansas, Larry Foley (film producer), that were funded by AHC grants was another experience to cherish.

I inherited skills of strategic planning and lobbying US Congressmen in Washington, D.C. through the AHC Board. Skill sets were gained from national conferences too. It was an experience on a different level to interview qualified Director applicants. It was exciting to approve grants that placed funding to make programs happen in small communities. The Smithsonian Institute's Museum on Main Street provided the "Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America" exhibit to Arkansas communities where their own famous citizens were recognized.

The CARES grant committee is a recent addition that funded some facilities under the humanities and was an honor for us. With this said, I urge you to review the grants on the AHC website and apply. Visit the site also for events happening in your area. Grow your programs for children and adults to participate in your hometowns. In addition, utilize the wealth of information within your libraries and museums. As an educator, I request for you to apply for the AHC REACH grants to expand your teaching experiences through workshops and to provide enriching materials for your students.

So, I will say goodbye but not farewell. I will continue to participate in the humanities. It has been a pleasure serving the people of Arkansas and more so for Arkansans to enrich my experiences in the humanities!

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# FROM THE DIRECTOR

Jama Best, Executive Director



The Arkansas Humanities Council continues to offer numerous grant opportunities in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. Funds are available to cultural nonprofits, humanities-based nonprofits,

colleges and universities, museums, libraries, archives, historic sites, historical societies, and schools.

We offer grants for public programs (virtual or in-person), research, publications, film production, and other media—virtual or in-person exhibits, humanities-based web content, historical markers. The grant type will depend on the amount of funds needed for your project. We offer minigrants of up to \$3,000 (deadline January 15 and June 15) or a major grant of up to \$15,000 (deadline September 15).

If you are a teacher or school librarian there are a number of grant opportunities just for you. They include the REACH Grant, Helen T. Leigh Museum Field Trip Grant, and Arkansas State Park Field Trip Grant. These grants offer an array of possibilities for humanities activities, programs, and professional development.

We continue to work remotely, but we are available to answer any questions, review drafts of proposals, discuss ideas, or offer assistance throughout the grant application process. We are here for you and can be reached via email. If you would like to talk by phone, send us an email with your phone number and we'll be glad to give you a call.

The Arkansas Humanities Council is here to serve Arkansans and will continue to do so in the months to come.

# CONNECT

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ON THE COVER: Part of an exhibit by contemporary artist Hank Willis Thomas at Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas.

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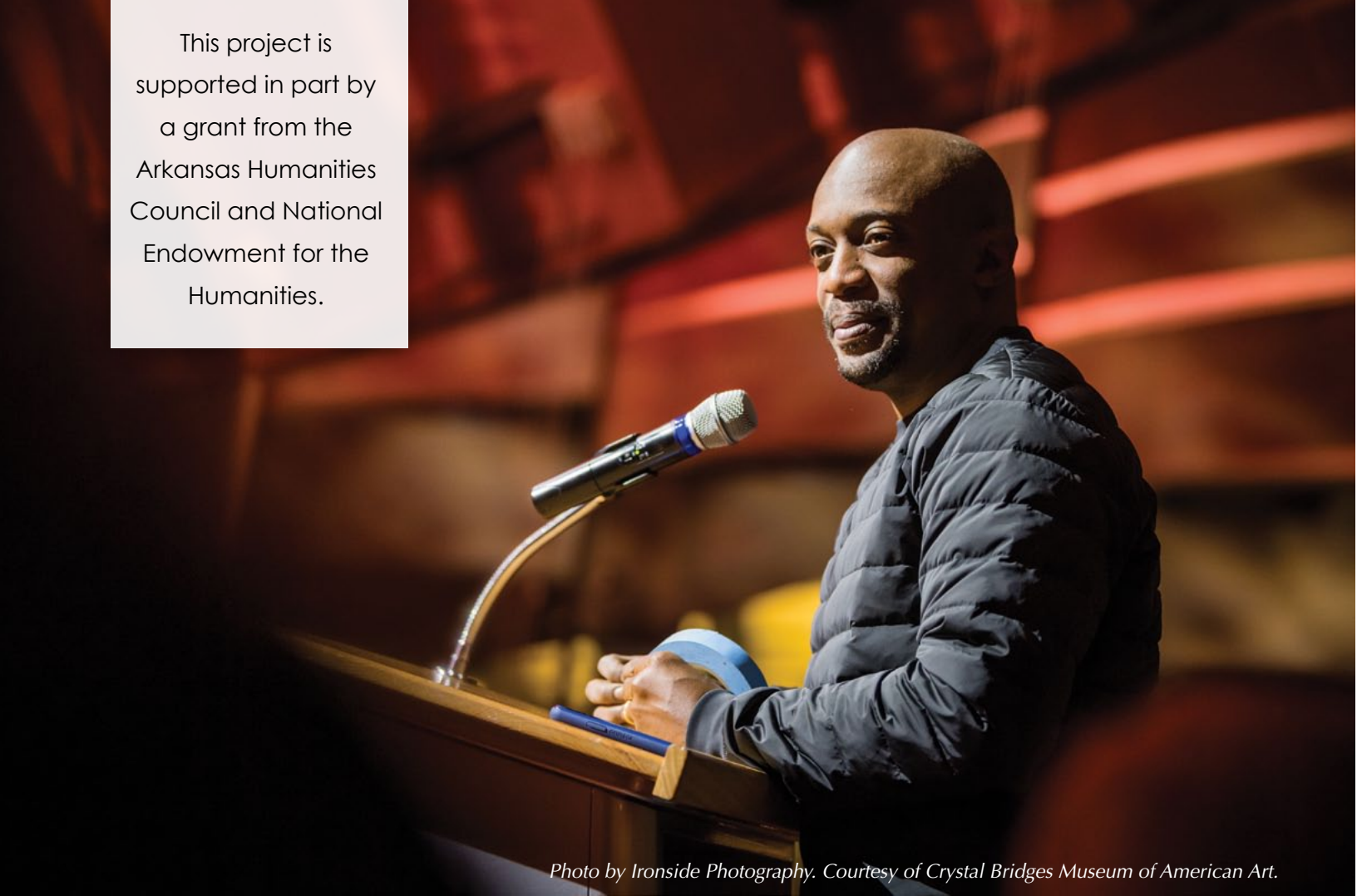


Photo by Ironside Photography. Courtesy of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

## Artist Hank Willis Thomas Inspires Change at Crystal Bridges

*Erica Harmon, Copywriter, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art*

Earlier this year, only a month before coronavirus swept the country, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas opened a new traveling exhibition dedicated to the art of a single contemporary artist: Hank Willis Thomas. In the midst of adversity and an energized movement to end racism and police brutality, Thomas's exhibition brought a fresh perspective, a call to action, and message of hope and love to its viewers at Crystal Bridges.

### **An Artist of (and for) Our Times**

Thomas is a conceptual artist who knows how to push boundaries and challenge ideas. For over 20 years, he has used photography, sculpture, and images from sports, advertising, and history to examine popular culture and show how art can raise awareness in the ongoing struggle for social justice and civil rights. His sculpture, *Unity*, was

installed near the Brooklyn Bridge in 2019, and his work can be found in the collections of Crystal Bridges, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, among others.

His work doesn't stop at artmaking. Thomas is also the co-founder of For Freedoms, a collaborative project focused on making space for art and civic engagement through exhibitions and conversation. He is also a member of the Public Design Commission for the City of New York and was recently chosen to design Boston's Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King Memorial with MASS Design Group. He has been an instructor in the MFA program at Yale University and the Maryland Institute College of Art and is a 2018 Guggenheim Fellowship award winner.

In *Hank Willis Thomas: All Things Being Equal...*, organized by the Portland Art Museum, Thomas's years of work in photography, sculpture, mixed media, video, and more came together in the artist's first comprehensive survey.

### Hank Willis Thomas at Crystal Bridges

The week before the exhibition's opening at Crystal Bridges, Thomas, along with his mother, artist, photographer, and MacArthur Genius, Deborah Willis, and a host of other family members and artist collaborators, came to the museum for a director's reception, exhibition preview, and opening lecture.

"Having Hank at the museum was like a dream," said Allison Glenn, Associate Curator, contemporary art at Crystal Bridges and in-house curator of *All Things Being Equal...* "At this point, Hank is like family. We've known each other for over 10 years and have worked on projects in Chicago and New Orleans. Being able to host him, his friends, and family felt warm, grounding, and reinforced the feeling of connection to the larger art world that visiting artists provide to our museum and community."

*All Things Being Equal...* opened to the public at Crystal Bridges on February 8, 2020. Over the next month, visitors explored and engaged with Thomas's myriad past projects. In his *Retroreflectives* series, Thomas isolates symbolic gestures from photographs of important historical events. It is only when viewers hold up a flashlight or snap a flash photo that they are able to see the full image.

Through sculpture, Thomas takes the punctum, or compelling detail, of photographs from apartheid-era South Africa and other notable moments in time, and transforms them in a new medium, giving them new life and new meaning beyond their original photograph.

"With pieces like this, I'm interested in trying to remind us to get closer to history," said Thomas.

The exhibition also featured Thomas's work with various organizations, such as For Freedoms. Its namesake was inspired by American artist Norman Rockwell's paintings of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms (1941) freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear, which were reflected for a new age in a photography project.

"We at For Freedoms have been trying to encourage artists to think about our country as their canvas and encourage people who don't necessarily engage in the art world to recognize that the work artists do is about all of us," said Thomas.

Just before the exit, near the *Four Freedoms* series, Head of Interpretation Stace Treat developed a space for visitors to respond to their ideas of freedom by writing on cards and hanging them in the gallery. "The writing activity allowed guests to reflect on and process their feelings and thoughts about Thomas's work and share their ideas about freedom with others," said Treat.

Organizing venue Portland Art Museum

*continued on page 4*



Photo by Ironside Photography. Courtesy of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

commissioned Thomas to create an artwork specifically for the exhibition titled *14,719*. The title refers to the number of stars stitched in rows on eight 30-foot banners that were suspended in the museum's corridor. Each star represents a person who was shot and killed by someone else in the US in 2018. This sobering work is one of many examples of how Thomas keeps a pulse on the current moment, utilizing art to raise awareness for social change, an effort that has continued to build momentum.

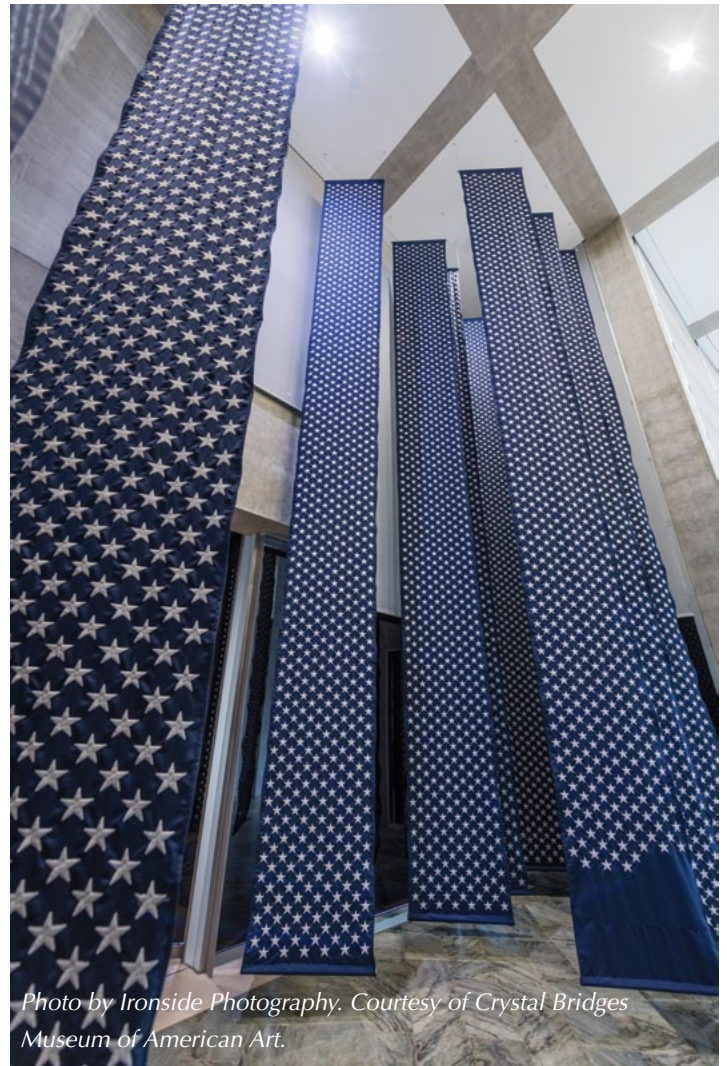
### **Adapting to 2020 Events**

In March, quarantine hit Northwest Arkansas. Crystal Bridges, along with the majority of businesses, closed its doors to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The museum did not want the closure to become a barrier to experiencing art, so images of the exhibition became available on the museum's website and Glenn filmed a curator walk-through of the show which was posted on the museum's YouTube channel.

In the summer, as Black Lives Matter protests rose in the wake of the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade, Crystal Bridges released a statement online and on social media channels supporting Black Lives Matter and Black art, and declaring a commitment to change.

Meanwhile, Thomas continued to produce. In May, Thomas projected prisoner letters expressing fears of catching coronavirus, collected by Baz Dreisinger, Executive Director of the think tank Incarceration Nations Network, on the side of Manhattan criminal justice buildings. A banner reading "ALL LI ES MATTER" covered the five-story Human Rights Campaign headquarters in Washington DC this summer. For Freedoms billboards started popping up around New York City. Thomas's sculpture *All Power to All People*, a 28-foot tall, 7,000-pound Afro pick, is currently touring cities around the US leading up to the presidential election in November.

These are just a few of the things Thomas has done in the past few months, but just like his exhibition shows, his work has always been focused on how art can inspire change and influence social justice.



*Photo by Ironside Photography. Courtesy of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.*

"The most revolutionary thing a person can do is be open to change."

— Hank Willis Thomas



And he's not slowing down.

The artist's quote that became the tagline of his exhibition is, "The most revolutionary thing a person can do is be open to change."

### Audience Responses

*All Things Being Equal...* was extended when the museum reopened in June and officially closed on July 13. In total, the exhibition welcomed more than 25,000 visitors to the physical space, with many more viewing the works online. Visitor feedback was highly positive, and concluded that the exhibition was "very interactive and moving," "meaningful," and "the conversation we should have." Evaluation results show that this exhibition introduced many visitors to Hank Willis Thomas for the first time, and achieved its goal of inspiring the public to reflect on struggles for equal rights across the globe, as well as the power of art.

The museum hopes that the questions and perspectives Thomas brought to life will continue

to serve as inspiration for community engagement and change in Northwest Arkansas and beyond.

Crystal Bridges' next exhibition, *Ansel Adams in Our Time*, opens September 19. Similar to Thomas's exhibition, *Ansel Adams in Our Time* looks at the work of contemporary photographers, but the show places famous nature photographer Ansel Adams squarely in our time to reassess his work and legacy side-by-side with today's artists. The show is on view until January 3.

Over at the Momentary, Crystal Bridges' satellite contemporary art space in downtown Bentonville, artist Nick Cave is, quite literally, taking over the galleries with his massive installations in a show called *Nick Cave: Until*, organized by MASS MoCA. This work, similar in theme to Thomas's work, uses immersive visual art to question race, gender, and gun violence in America. This exhibition is also on view until January 3, 2021 and is free to view.



Photo by Ironside Photography. Courtesy of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

# Arkansas Imagination Library: Inspiring Young Minds Through Books

Brooke Ivy Bridges, Affiliate Resource Director, Arkansas Imagination Library



Mark Bledsoe (first from left) and Molly Riley (second from right), representing United Way of Greater Texarkana, receive welcome books from Dolly Parton (second from left) and Brooke Bridges (fourth from left) with Arkansas Imagination Library.

Arkansas Imagination Library (ARIL) is grateful to the Arkansas Humanities Council for partnering with ARIL to promote the humanities among growing families in underserved areas of Arkansas. With financial support from the Council, nearly 1,500 copies of *The Little Engine That Could* have been distributed to birthing hospitals in south and southeast Arkansas. These books are the first step to helping children develop a love of reading.

Families of newborns receive *The Little Engine That Could*, the welcome book for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, soon after their child is born at a partnering hospital. Families receive the book

as a gift for registering their newborns for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library through a local Imagination Library affiliate. Along with this gift from the Arkansas Humanities Council, newborns also receive a gift that continues to give: one free book mailed to the family's home each month until the child turns five years old.

Each book provided by Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is selected by a national committee of teachers, child development specialists, librarians, publishers, and others specializing in early childhood literacy. Special attention is given to age-appropriateness and the development of such positive themes as promotion of self-esteem and



confidence, regard for diversity, and appreciation of art. *The Little Engine That Could* — one of Dolly Parton's favorite books — was selected for its positive, inspiring message that encourages readers of all ages.

With help from local Imagination Library affiliate leaders and hospital staff and volunteers, welcome books are currently distributed to families of newborns in Chicot, Drew, Miller, and Phillips Counties. Additional books will soon be distributed to families at birthing hospitals in Desha, St. Francis, and Union Counties.

Dr. Charlotte R. Green, Executive Director of Arkansas Imagination Library, states, "We are excited to partner with the Arkansas Humanities Council to grow Imagination Library enrollment in areas where children may lack access to home libraries. Thanks to the Council's generous support, books provided to newborns are going to families in high-poverty areas of the state that typically have lower than average third-grade reading comprehension test scores. By getting age-appropriate books to families, we can encourage parents to read to their children and inspire a love of reading from birth."

Arkansas Imagination Library, established in 2017, is a state-wide partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Currently, 42,747 books are mailed to Arkansas children each month through independent Imagination Library affiliates operating in all 75 Arkansas counties.

Since launching in 1995, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has become the world's preeminent early childhood book gifting program. The program's impact has been widely researched, and results suggest positive increases in key early childhood metrics. The flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation has mailed well over 100 million free books in Australia, Canada, The Republic of Ireland, United Kingdom, and the United States.

For more information, visit [imaginationlibrary.com](http://imaginationlibrary.com) and [arkansasimaginationlibrary.org](http://arkansasimaginationlibrary.org).



*Shelby Brown with Wadley Regional Medical Center in Texarkana, Arkansas, accepts welcome books for newborns delivered at the medical center.*



# Ordinary Happiness in Extraordinary Times

William “Bill” Tsutsui, Ph.D.

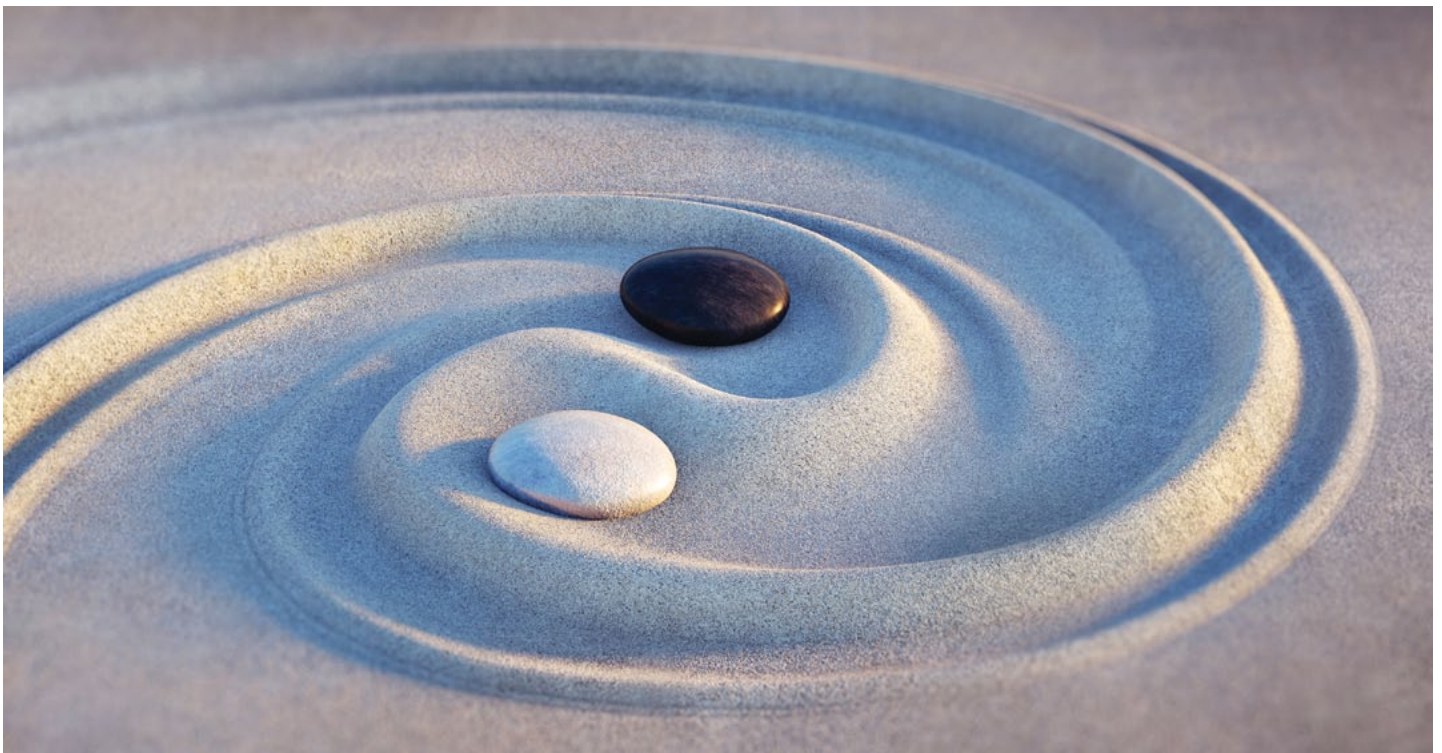
*Scholar, author, specialist in economic, environmental and cultural history of modern Japan*

Even before any of us had ever heard of a coronavirus or social distancing, we lived in very stressful times. In recent years, politics have been more polarized, society more fragmented, our shared sense of national community more strained, public discourse more contentious, and consensus (even on topics as fundamental as democracy and humanity) more elusive than ever before, at least in my lifetime. Technology, despite its promise of liberation and empowerment, has often seemed more of the problem than the solution: the internet has facilitated (and even accelerated) the tribalization of our society; social media has shortened our attention spans, redefined community, and challenged our faith in things like facts and news and truth; the ubiquity of the digital has allowed us all to be tracked and profiled and churned through algorithms in ways that were never conceivable in an analog age.

I suspect I am not alone in feeling my blood pressure go up every time I listen to political news on the radio, or see a Facebook post about the latest from Washington, or think about any number of subjects that divide our society and our world (from climate change to racial justice, health care costs to the Second Amendment,

immigration to the Me Too movement). And escape is all but impossible, as our cellphones are almost always at hand, ping-pong or vibrating or lighting up with each new text and email and tweet. Is it any wonder that, in these days of pandemic, protest and isolation, “doomsurfing” and “doomscrolling”—the obsessive practices of combing the web and social media for the latest despairing news—have become national pastimes?

While stress today weighs heavily on us all, it is a particular challenge for young people. Gen Z, the generation now in their college years, have grown up in a world of school shootings, of economic precarity after the financial crisis of 2008 and the Great Recession, of protective helicopter and steamroller parents, and of worries about student debt, a shrinking middle class, and the new gig economy. Howard Gardner, a well-known developmental psychologist and professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has been working for the past six years on a huge study of the attitudes of college students, interviewing more than 2000 at campuses across the nation. What Gardner has found is foremost among students’ concerns these days, more so than



“What really makes us  
 happy? And what can  
 we all do, in this  
 extraordinary time, to  
 overcome all the bad  
 news and fake news  
 and to find some  
 simple joy within and  
 beyond ourselves?”



finances or politics or gender identities or free speech, are two things: first, alienation (the sense that they somehow don't fit, with their schools or with other people or in the larger society) and second, anxiety (an often debilitating sense of fear that undermines their personal wellbeing and mental health). One of the great challenges for higher education today, Gardner concludes, is how America's colleges and universities can better help young people in their struggle to find belonging and inner peace.

Needless to say, this search for personal contentment is a challenge for us all, not just 18-year-olds, in the complicated, uncertain, fractured world in which we all live. We all desperately need to step back, put down the cellphone, breathe deeply, and ask ourselves, “What really makes us happy? And what can we all do, in this extraordinary time, to overcome all the bad news and fake news and to find some simple joy within and beyond ourselves?” Cute

cat pictures on Instagram are all well and good, but what is the secret to a deeper sense of genuine happiness in life?

As I ponder this question, which I do quite regularly these days, I find myself almost inevitably returning to something I read, a book that took on the issues I have been struggling with, made me think, and inspired and empowered me to reflect, respond, and imagine. Willard Spiegelman's *Seven Pleasures: Essays on Ordinary Happiness* is a slim, unassuming volume, now about a decade old. I first picked it up not out of particular interest in the topic, but because the author was a friend and colleague. Before coming to Arkansas, I spent four years as Dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences at SMU in Dallas, where Spiegelman was (prior to his retirement not too long ago) a distinguished professor of English, the editor of the venerable literary quarterly *Southwestern Review*, and a legendary scholar and teacher. Spiegelman is a

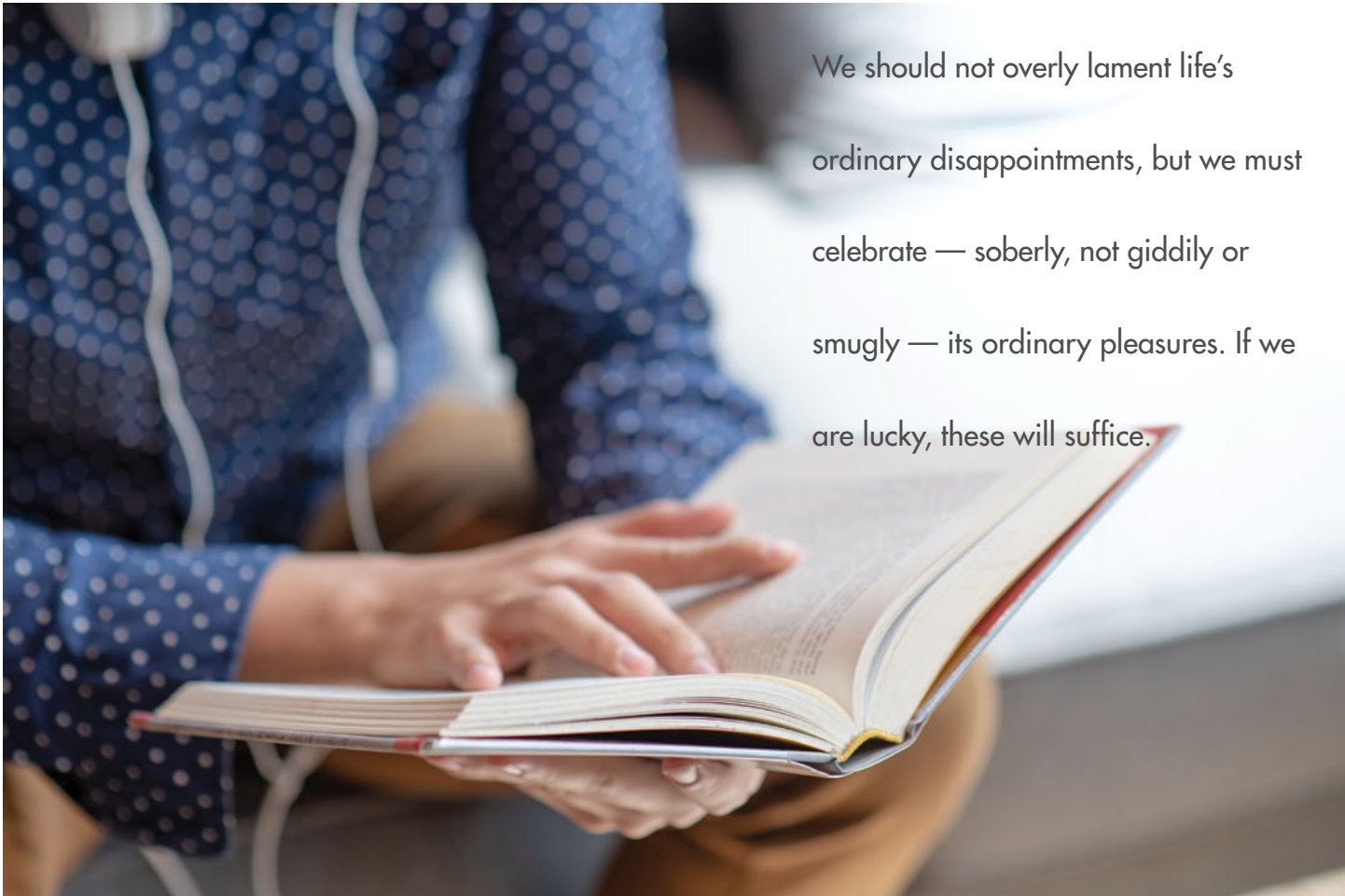
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genuine intellectual, in the best sense of the word: urbane, elegant and exact in writing and speech, distressingly well read, and a fine arts maven (for many years he wrote opera and art reviews for the *Wall Street Journal*). And Professor Spiegelman very much looks the part: silk sport jackets and immaculate bow ties, never a hair out of place, shoes always of leather and no doubt custom-made in London. His tongue, of course, was and is as sharp as a sabre, and generations of SMU administrators shared the same nightmare of Willard Spiegelman raising his hand during a contentious faculty meeting.

*Seven Pleasures* is a marvelous read: smart, lyrical at points, engaging, funny, moving at times, and always (on every page) thought-provoking. Spiegelman's goal with the volume is deceptively simple and outrageously ambitious. "This is a book about happiness," he writes. "About the pleasurable things you can do to promote it and to increase a sense of general well-being." But this is no self-help text, no one-size-fits-all roadmap to

a joyful, stress-free life. Instead, it is almost a memoir, an introspective journey into what has made Willard content over six-plus decades of a life marked by a happy childhood, no bouts of depression, no major catastrophes, and much to take pleasure in. "I have enjoyed good physical health," he notes. "I have not known tragedy or chronic darkness, only more modest shades of gray. Everyone has what I call the phantom vita: prizes not won, jobs applied for but not offered, unrequited love. So what? If you miss a bus, you can get on the next one. We should not overly lament life's ordinary disappointments, but we must celebrate — soberly, not giddily or smugly — its ordinary pleasures. If we are lucky, these will suffice."

Spiegelman goes on in the subsequent chapters to explore seven of those "ordinary pleasures" that, for him, at least, have sufficed over the course of a lifetime: reading, walking, looking, dancing, listening, swimming, and writing. These seven unexceptional activities (the number inspired in

A photograph showing a person's hands holding an open book. The person is wearing a blue patterned shirt. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

We should not overly lament life's ordinary disappointments, but we must celebrate — soberly, not giddily or smugly — its ordinary pleasures. If we are lucky, these will suffice.



Spiegelman's playful mind, I suspect, by the seven deadly sins) make a useful starting point for us all to reflect on what brings us happiness.

If you are anything like me, your first thought is probably to cross things off Spiegelman's list. Swimming doesn't make the cut for me, since I have never learned how to swim and "flailing in the water" or "drowning" do not even make my personal Top 100 of pleasurable things to do. Dancing is also easily eliminated, both out of intense self-consciousness and a healthy respect for the happiness of others, as the sight of me dancing is likely to inspire immediate revulsion or the concern I was having some sort of seizure. Writing is something I personally associate with pain and torment, with perpetual disappointment at not achieving the style and clarity that I strive for, and so would not make it onto my happy list either.

But Spiegelman's other four might. Like all who are passionate about the Humanities, I cherish reading and especially that tactile joy of turning the pages in a good, old-fashioned hardback book. Walking surely makes the cut for me too, as nothing clears my head and lifts my spirit quite like a good brisk walk amidst nature or in an

interesting, busy place. Looking is a joy as well, especially the kind of looking that Spiegelman describes, which is not so much looking at TV or looking at a smartphone, but rather losing oneself visually in art or the landscape or anything of beauty and depth. Listening would not be at the very top of my list, as I have a tin ear and music appreciation is largely lost on me, but being attentive to what others may say, or to birds in song, or to the cicadas in summer, or to the crunch of snow under my feet in winter all have a certain satisfying appeal.

And, of course, I could add to Spiegelman's list in my own personal ways. Cooking would certainly be a strong candidate for me, especially since (as so many people have discovered in these days of pandemic) baking cakes and loaves sustains the soul as well as the body. I am also uplifted by being in nature, as few things provide me with the wonderment and joy of witnessing a Monarch caterpillar transform into a butterfly, or the tiny little bunnies that appear each spring in my backyard become rabbits, or the honking formations of geese move across the fall sky. While I would never include cleaning on my Top Seven list (there is no happiness for me in mopping or scrubbing), I would put tidying in

*continued on page 12*

there, as evening up the piles on my desk or lining up all the volumes neatly on my bookshelves provides me with a soothing spiritual balm of all being right with the world.

What I love about Spiegelman's *Seven Pleasures* is that it challenges readers to appreciate the small things, to do the difficult work of taking pleasure in the ordinary, to lose oneself in the joys of daily life, to recognize that real happiness need not be about the occasional fireworks so much as the regular, ongoing glow from everyday activities.

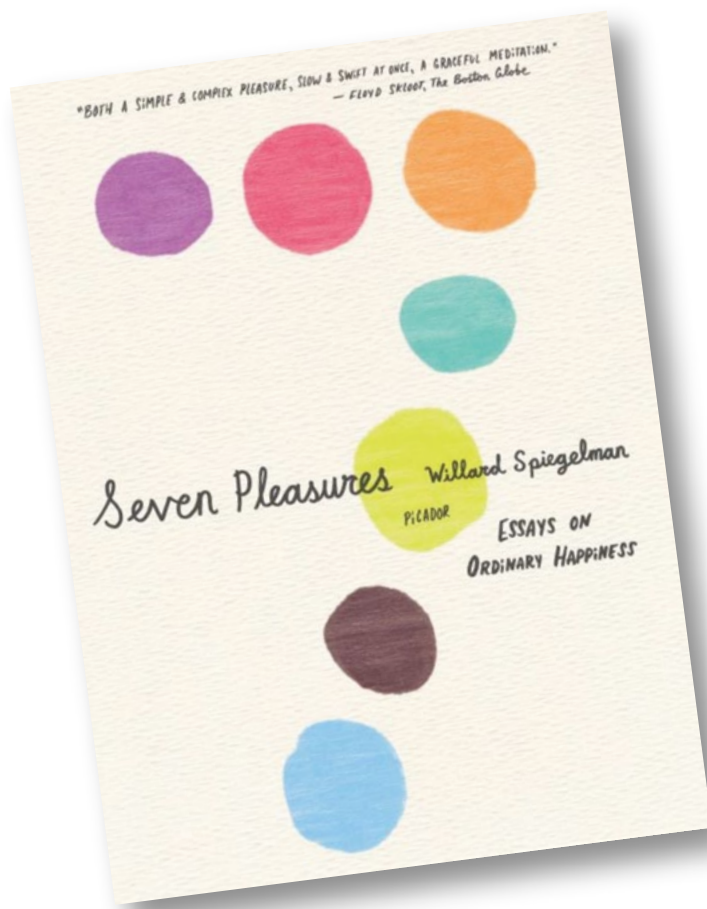
What I don't love so much about those *Seven Pleasures* is that they are all, with the exception of dancing, solitary activities. "This is a book," Willard Spiegelman writes, "about aloneness." While I have always valued "me time" as much as anyone, I wonder if we had enough aloneness in this world even before lockdowns and social distancing imposed unprecedented isolation upon us all. The withdrawal from "normal" life has given me a heightened awareness of so many trivial everyday acts — paying with cash, ironing my shirts, shining my shoes, grazing on free samples at the grocery store — that I only really appreciated when the fear of a virus stripped them from my daily routine. But, of course, what I miss the most — what I expect we all miss most acutely about our pre-COVID lives — is that easy sociability we enjoyed with family, co-workers and friends, the pats on the back and handshakes, the gatherings in the neighborhood or at church, the passing conversations in line at the post office or around the proverbial water cooler. And while I am truly thankful, under the circumstances, for the magic of Zoom and webcams and streaming video, these extraordinary times have awakened me to the ordinary happiness of being with others that I used to take for granted.

When, at last, we can all take off our facemasks and ease up on the hand-sanitizer, I for one will not be quick to forget the simple pleasures that I discovered — as well as those that I lost — during the global pandemic. I'll still be baking and walking and thumbing through Willard Spiegelman's book, but I will also be more

intentional in treasuring, nurturing, and celebrating those unexceptional little interpersonal interactions that affirm and uplift and connect and bond us together as a community, a nation, and a world.

*Bill Tsutsui served as President of Hendrix College from 2014 to 2019 and is currently the Edwin O. Reischauer Distinguished Visiting Professor at Harvard University. He was Chair of the Board of Directors of the Federation of State Humanities Councils from 2017-2019 and was appointed in May 2020 to the Japan-United States Friendship Commission. He lives in Conway with his wife, Marjorie Swann.*

*An earlier version of this piece was presented at the Founder's Day Luncheon of LifeQuest of Arkansas in Little Rock on October 2, 2019.*



## Staff Highlight



Ann Clements  
*Education Outreach Coordinator*

### **Clements Named Education Outreach Coordinator**

Executive Director Jama Best is pleased to announce the addition of Ann Clements to the AHC staff as the new Education Outreach Coordinator beginning October 1, 2020.

Clements has extensive experience creating public programming and classroom lesson plans. In her almost 28 years in the Secretary of State's office, Clements served under four different Secretaries of State with her responsibilities growing under each administration. As the first state Capitol Historian, she curated over 30 quarterly exhibits for the Capitol building, and served as the Project Director for "Building Forever," a permanent exhibit about the Capitol's construction story, funded by a major grant from the AHC. She also was the statewide director for the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial, the Education Coordinator and the Director of the Communications and Education Department. After leaving the Secretary of State's office, Clements worked for the Arkansas State Archives as a program specialist, writing lesson plans, developing outreach programs and assisting staff with archival projects. In each position, Clements wrote and received multiple grants from the AHC for various projects.

Clements graduated from Ouachita Baptist University where she studied History and Political Science. Her love of history and civics education has been a touchstone throughout her government service, including developing topic specific tour programming for the Capitol, working with Secretary Priest's History Advisory Council to research and publish an updated version of the Arkansas State Symbols coloring book, and overseeing a teacher-led curriculum committee to develop over 25 K-8 civics lesson plans for distribution to classrooms across Arkansas during Secretary Daniels' term.

"The Arkansas Humanities Council has supported educators and students for many years. Now more than ever, AHC wishes to increase that support by working with and learning from educators statewide and Ann will be a vital part of that effort. Ann's wealth of knowledge and expertise is invaluable and will build upon our success to take that support to a whole new level. We are so excited to welcome her to our team," Jama Best, Executive Director stated.

"I'm so honored to be joining the staff of the organization that made so many of my professional projects a reality," Clements stated. "To be able to work with teachers — especially in underserved areas — to spread humanities education across Arkansas is exciting and a great responsibility in these challenging times," she continued.

# Hugh Manatee's Corner

Draw a line to connect the fun fact to the correct president!

The president who officially gave the White House its name.

One of his favorite foods was ice cream.

First president to be born in the United States. His parents were originally from the Netherlands and moved to Kinderhook, New York.

First left-handed president.

He was the tallest president.

Only president who studied to become a medical doctor.

George Washington  
April 30, 1789 – March 4, 1797

Abraham Lincoln  
March 4, 1861 – April 14, 1865

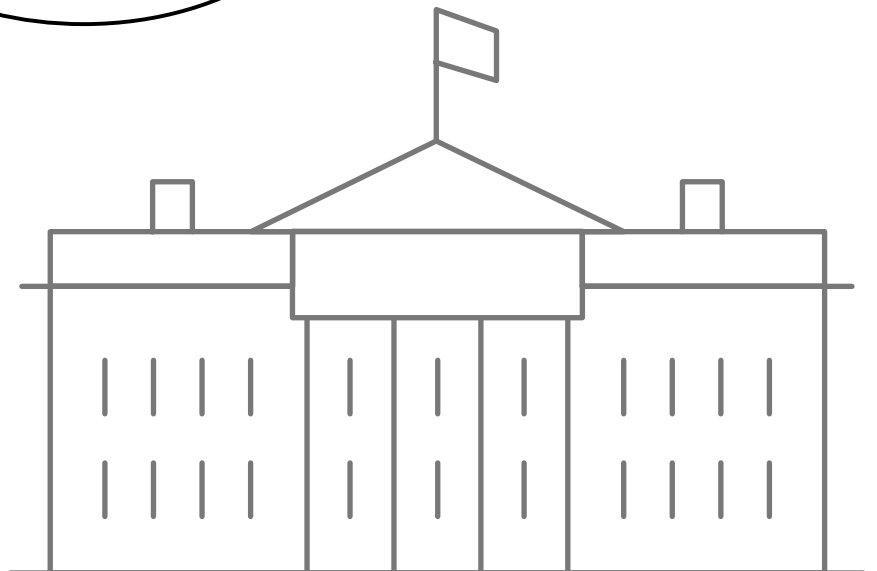
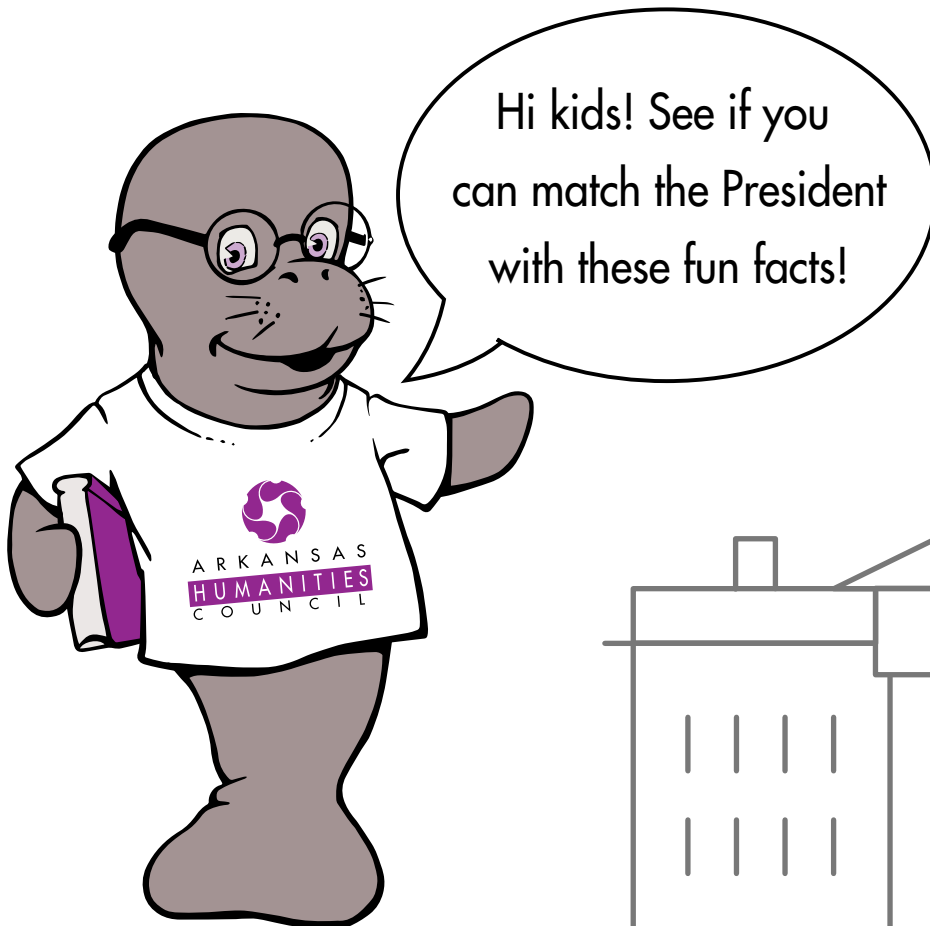
Theodore Roosevelt  
September 14, 1901 – March 4, 1909

James Garfield  
March 4, 1881 – September 19, 1881

Henry Harrison  
March 4, 1841 – April 4, 1841

Martin Van Buren  
March 4, 1837 – March 4, 1841

Answers on page 25







Mt. Magazine State Park

## Intrapreneurship: A Covid-19 Response to Economics

### A Walk in the Park Professional Development for Educators

By Dr. Rita L. Littrell, Director, Bessie B. Moore Center for Economic Education,  
Sam M. Walton College of Business, University of Arkansas

As an economist who understands the value of nature to our economic and physical well-being, leading a summer professional development program for teachers to nine Arkansas State Parks helping them to understand how to use the parks to teach Arkansas history was a great summer project. But when the coronavirus surfaced in Arkansas, visits to the parks were extremely limited. It was time to consider another alternative. I also develop curricula on entrepreneurship for K-12 educators with a focus on Arkansas entrepreneurs. As a native Arkansan, I believe the diverse natural beauty of Arkansas is an asset of which we should be proud. A term that is often overlooked but that can bring great value to large organizations is intrapreneurship — where an employee acts like an entrepreneur within an organization. Due to the pandemic I decided to do as entrepreneurs do and assess my

resources relative to our desired outcome. As director of the Bessie B. Moore Center for Economic Education in the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas, I was challenged to find a way to virtually engage teachers as they learned about our state parks. Through a grant funded by the Arkansas Humanities Council, Arkansas Council on Economic Education offered *Economics: A Walk in the Park* in partnership with the center and Arkansas State Parks. Replacing an actual Arkansas State Park visit was a pretty big challenge. I realized that something virtual yet engaging was needed. As economic educators, we always consider the incentives for our participants. Creating something that helps them to be more effective teachers is always a win. I also realized that I had some students who were unemployed and waiting for six weeks to begin

*continued on page 16*

their internship program. I reached out to four of these students to see if they wanted to expand their resumes since I had no funding to support their efforts. Blake Carter, Elizabeth Fletcher, Joey Snow, and Anastasia Young were game! And I was confident they had better technology learning skills than I do! Their help teaching the program was an asset to teachers and to me.

As we discussed goals of the project and explored different digital platforms the ideas began to take shape. All four students were history majors so learning about Arkansas State Parks and creating activities their future students could use to explore the parks was a great fit for their own professional development. I believe the end result speaks for itself! *Parks and Tourism in the Natural State: An Economic Driver.* <https://sites.google.com/view/arkansashistorypd/home>

The project began by teaching the history of and goals of Arkansas State Parks. This was done through the development of an Arkansas State Parks Timeline using the Tiki Toki program.

Students in grades four to high school were asked to learn about the parks using the Timeline for history and pictures of the parks and Google Earth which provides a geographic dimension. Students' park research was captured using One-Pagers which provided creative outlets for the summary of student learning. A video describing the origins of Arkansas State Parks and the funding issues over time showed the value of the A75 Conservation Sales Tax passed in 1996 for the maintenance and upkeep of the Arkansas State Parks. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Keep Arkansas Beautiful, and the Department of Arkansas Heritage — all treasures to the state — were included in the funding.

To initiate the project, students learn about the diverse natural resources found in each of the 52 Arkansas State Parks. These parks cover almost 55,000 acres; access 27 lakes and 18 rivers; through 435 trails for people, bikes, or animals. They learn about the capital resources or facilities that help 8 million visitors access the parks and the activities and education embedded within

***Petit Jean State Park***





*Cossatot River State Park*

them. These facilities include the parks, cabins, lodges, marinas, gift shops, museums, national historic landmarks, and more. Students learn about the 600 full-time and 800 seasonal workers or human capital who provide the various services needed to run the parks and their programs. The educators welcomed the opportunity to introduce students to an additional career path for those interested in history, nature or culture. In 2018 the 8 million visitors to the Arkansas State Parks resulted in \$7.37 billion in expenditures, \$408 million in state taxes, and \$161 million in local taxes, resulting in 1 billion dollars of economic impact.

A video produced by the Arkansas State Parks was used to describe the founding of the Arkansas State Parks and their goals of:

1. providing quality recreational and educational opportunities;
2. preserving natural, historical and cultural resources;
3. enhancing the economy;
4. leading in resource conservation; and
5. honoring tradition and seeking innovation.

With this understanding, a project is included where students are challenged to create a park to attract Generation Z to a fictitious newly created park. Students were allotted a limited budget, natural resources, and income generating activities. As you might imagine, in the fictitious parks technology often interfaced with the natural world to create new ways to learn about Arkansas' history, culture and nature. Student created parks included new camping facilities that hang or float. Concerts conducted on floating platforms in lakes provided musical or theatrical entertainment. Selfie station points were a high priority. Charging stations and new apps such as bird call identification were included. The ideas were fun and thought provoking. And some were possibilities for engaging tomorrow's leaders.

Teachers participating in the professional development received *Natural Numbers: An Arkansas Numbers Book* written by Michael Shoulders. Activities were included for teachers to use when reading the book. Gaming activities, such as Mystery Parks, introduced learners to the Arkansas Parks system while a Quizizz game determines who

learned the most during the study in a competitive and engaging way.

While my college students were researching for project development purposes, many great educational resources were found to facilitate research and showcase ways to engage with the curriculum. A lengthy list of resources is provided in the *Quick Links* section of the web portal so teachers can create and assign a variety of projects to students. These included links to the Arkansas Humanities Council and their Arkansas State Park Field Trip Grant for teachers, Arkansas Tourism videos and Channels, Natural State Entrepreneurs curriculum, Arkansas Parks Digital Discovery, and additional economic education resources. Each park interpreter at the six parks virtually visited developed new videos or activities to share with the teachers and students. Examples include videos of a historic blacksmith's job at Historic Washington State Park, forest ecosystems and a tree leaf maze at Hobbs State Park and Conservation Area, *Travel Through Time* on boats at the Lake Dardanelle State Park, Native American stories at Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park, videos on the Louisiana Purchase and Mississippi River State Park, and an interpretive film from Jacksonport State Park. These are included on the website for future use by teachers.

My four students learned so much about the technologies they selected and used that they developed Tech How-To Videos. Educators can learn from them or even have their students use the videos to facilitate new technology development projects.

<https://sites.google.com/view/arkansashistorypd/tech-how-to-videos>

In the end, the development team learned a great deal and left a trail of resources to be used throughout the state. Two hundred and twenty teachers participated in the program resulting in 660 hours of professional development. It occurred to me that I was one of few who learned so much new material about the Arkansas State Parks since each program was different. It is our

goal that this project will be used for years to come by Arkansas history teachers for virtual and in class activities. The Arkansas Humanities Council offers numerous grant opportunities for educators including the Arkansas State Park Field Trip Grant and the R.E.A.C.H. Grant to support visits to the parks and projects teaching Arkansas history. It is my hope that we can develop further programs to introduce more educators to the resources we discovered. A state-wide competition for classes on creating a new park for Generation Z would be a great engagement opportunity!

This project is supported by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and National Endowment for the Humanities.



# In Memory of Ramona J. Roe

*Jama Best, Executive Director*

The Arkansas Humanities Council wishes to extend our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Wanda Roe of Pea Ridge, Arkansas and her family in the passing of Ramona J. Roe.

Throughout Wanda's service to the AHC board as a Governor's Appointee, Ramona (daughter) often joined us for receptions, dinners, and retreats. Board and staff all enjoyed visiting with Mrs. Roe and Ramona, often hurriedly trying to get a seat at their table as to not miss out on a good story. You could expect great stories that included topics about Arkansas history — Elwin "Preacher" Roe, Major League Baseball player (1938 – 1954) and husband to Wanda, Arkansas law, and so much more. We all have many fond memories of those times.

On April 2, 2020, Ramona passed away leaving behind a lasting legacy. Ramona received her Juris Doctorate from the UALR William H. Bowen School of Law (formerly UALR Law School) in 1976. She went on to serve as associate editor of the *UA Little Rock Law Review* ("*The Review*"). Her professional roles were many. She practiced law in Rogers and Little Rock, served as Lowell City Attorney, and taught English at the college level. She was working at the Bureau of Legislative Research at the time of her retirement.

Ramona had a passion for Arkansas history, politics, law, and education. In honor of Ramona's memory, Mrs. Roe established the Ramona J. Roe Memorial Humanities Scholar Fund in the amount of \$10,000. The fund will provide honoraria to humanities scholars through a speaker's series sponsored by the Arkansas Humanities Council on various topics pertaining to American and Arkansas history, law, the United State Constitution, and/or similar subjects.

We are grateful to Mrs. Roe for the generous gift in memory of her daughter Ramona and will honor her life and legacy through the Ramona J. Roe Memorial Humanities Scholar Fund.

# CARES Act Grant

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by the U. S. Congress and signed into law by President Donald J. Trump. The National Endowment for the Humanities received \$75 million in supplemental funding with \$30 million provided to state and jurisdictional councils to assist cultural institutions affected by COVID-19.

This emergency funding was available to support at-risk humanities positions and projects at museums, libraries and archives, historic sites, historical societies, colleges and universities, and other cultural nonprofits that have been impacted by the coronavirus.

These organizations have experienced numerous hardships such as temporary or limited closure, furloughed or laid off employees, loss of significant revenue, delayed or cancelled programming or events, disruptions in utilities due to loss of funding stream, internet cancellation, and/or other similar hardship.

The amount of loss is significant. The total amount of losses reported by CARES Act grant recipients is \$3,077,819.

The Arkansas Humanities Council approved a total of 54 CARES Act Grants totaling \$471,767.

Funds were awarded in one or more of the following:

- General operating support including costs associated with salaries, utilities, internet service, technology assistance, rent or lease payments.
- Programming including webinars, online conferences and workshops, virtual museum tours and exhibits, educational and interpretive videos, self-paced online humanities-based courses, and/or website enhancement for promotion of educational humanities learning.
- Professional development in the areas of museum practices and standards, archival training, interpretation, and collections management.
- Language access for all eligible activities including translation into Spanish, American Sign Language or other languages.
- Enhancements in accessibility of services and programs including captioning, creation of accessible documents, or improving accessibility of website.
- Fees to humanities scholars and other individuals participating in humanities programming.

# CARES Act Grants May 2020

## **Arkansas Arts Center Foundation (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Devin Hancock  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Arkansas Council on Economic Education (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Ginsie Higgs  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$11,853

## **Arkansas School for the Deaf (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Kevin Lentz  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$13,661

## **Arkansas Tech University (Russellville)**

Project Director: James Peck  
Category: Humanities Project  
\$4,500

## **Arts and Science Center for Southeast Arkansas (Pine Bluff)**

Project Director: Chaney Jewell  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Boone County Historical & Railroad Society (Harrison)**

Project Director: Toinette Madison  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Boone County Library (Harrison)**

Project Director: Ginger Schoenenberger  
Category: Humanities Project  
\$8,764

## **Botanical Garden Society of the Ozarks, Inc. (Fayetteville)**

Project Director: Charlotte Taylor  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Brandon House (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Pamela Bax  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$14,205

## **Calico Rock Community Foundation, Inc. (Calico Rock)**

Project Director: Steven Mitchell  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **City of Altus (Altus)**

Project Director: Veronica Post  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$4,100

## **City of Berryville/Saunders Memorial Museum (Berryville)**

Project Director: Linda Riddlesperger  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Cross County Historical Society (Wynne)**

Project Director: Frankie Sullivan  
Category: Humanities Project/General Operating Expenses  
\$5,000

## **El Dorado Festivals and Events, Inc. (El Dorado)**

Project Director: Gay Bechtelheimer  
Category: Humanities Project  
\$10,772

## **Eureka Springs Historical Museum (Eureka Springs)**

Project Director: Dawn Ward  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Faulkner County Museum (Conway)**

Project Director: Lynita Langley-Ware  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$4,952

## **Fayetteville Public Library (Fayetteville)**

Project Director: Ashlyn Gagnon  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$10,577

## **Fort Smith Heritage Foundation (Fort Smith)**

Project Director: Mila Masur  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$5,300

## **Fort Smith Museum of History (Fort Smith)**

Project Director: Helen Speir  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Fort Smith Regional Art Museum (Fort Smith)**

Project Director: Julie Moncrief  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$9,725

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# CARES Act Grants May 2020 *continued*

## **Friends of the Malvern-Hot Spring County Library (Malvern)**

Project Director: Barry Honold  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$1,000

## **Gann Museum of Saline County (Benton)**

Project Director: Lindsay Jordan  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$3,468

## **Garland County Historical Society (Hot Springs)**

Project Director: Elizabeth Robbins  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$14,932

## **Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas (Springdale)**

Project Director: Margarita Solorzano  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$10,800

## **Just Communities of Arkansas (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Donald Wood  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$10,500

## **MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Stephan McAteer  
Category: Humanities Project  
\$14,988

## **Manila Depot Committee (Manila)**

Project Director: Donna Jackson  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$4,394

## **Mosaic Templars Cultural Center (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Jaimie Wright  
Category: Humanities Project  
\$8,000

## **Museum of Discovery (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Catherine Bays  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Old Independence Regional Museum (Batesville)**

Project Director: Alan Bufford  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$8,262

## **Ouachita County Historical Society (Camden)**

Project Director: Kathy Boyette  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **Ozark Arts Council**

Project Director: Julianna Hamblin  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$15,000

## **People Helping Others Excel By Example**

Project Director: Cheryl Batts  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$5,714

## **Philander Smith College**

Project Director: Carmen Parks  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$7,500

## **Preserve Arkansas**

Project Director: Rachel Patton  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$13,876

## **Pulaski County Historical Society**

Shannon Lausch  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$4,500

## **Quapaw Quarter Association**

Patricia Blick  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$14,415

## **Randolph County Heritage Museum/Five Rivers Historic Preservation Inc**

Project Director: Rodney Harris  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$10,000

## **Rector Community Museum, Inc**

Project Director: Joey Pruett  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$2,000

## **Shiloh Museum of Ozark History**

Project Director: Allyn Lord  
Category: Humanities Project  
\$6,330

## **South Arkansas Historical Society, Inc.**

Project Director: Aubra Anthony, Jr.  
Category: General Operating Expenses  
\$13,000



**Sultana Historical Preservation Society**

Project Director: Kay Brockwell  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$7,150

**United Methodist Museum**

Project Director: Shakeelah Rahman  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$5,590

**University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff**

Project Director: Laurence Alexander  
 Category: Humanities Project  
 \$7,400

**University of Arkansas at Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture**

Project Director: Deborah Baldwin  
 Category: Humanities Project  
 \$14,950

**University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service**

Project Director: Nikolai DiPippa  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$8,000

## CARES Act Grants August 2020

**Arkansas Council on Economic Education (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Ginsie Higgs  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$500

**Arkansas Museums Association (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Angela Albright  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$1,000

**Brandon House (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Pamela Bax  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$500

**Calico Rock Community Foundation, Inc. (Calico Rock)**

Project Director: Steven Mitchell  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$850

**Clinton House Museum (Fayetteville)**

Project Director: Angela Albright  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$500

**Colt Community Development (Colt)**

Project Director: Ann Meals  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$807

**Dallas County (Fordyce)**

Project Director: Sandra Parham Turner  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$750

**Manila Depot Committee (Manila)**

Project Director: Donna Jackson  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$500

**Old Independence Regional Museum (Batesville)**

Project Director: Alan Bufford  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$809

**Preserve Arkansas (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Rachel Patton  
 Category: Humanities Project  
 \$500

**Shiloh Museum of Ozark History (Springdale)**

Project Director: Kimberly Hosey  
 Category: Humanities Project  
 \$500

**University of Arkansas at Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture (Little Rock)**

Project Director: Deborah Baldwin  
 Category: Humanities Project  
 \$500

**Walnut Ridge Army Flying School Museum, Inc. (Walnut Ridge)**

Project Director: Billy H. Johnson  
 Category: General Operating Expenses  
 \$750

# Mini Grant Awards June 2020

## **From Shotgun to Historic Preservation: An Architectural Study of John H. Johnson Museum**

Organization: Alex Foundation  
Project Director: Angela Courtney  
Award: \$1,472

Alex Foundation will use a digital platform to introduce 7th grade youth to the architectural history of the former boyhood "shotgun" home of John H. Johnson repurposed into a historical museum and educational center.

## **Student-Led Mini-Museum Exhibition**

Organization: Black River Technical College  
Project Director: Rhonda Stone  
Award: \$934

History Professor Dr. Dianna Fraley, created this student-led museum project where students will take an independent approach in creating an artifact exhibit to learn the historical relevance and associated cultural implications of said artifact, while also gaining an understanding of the skill sets and processes required to create a museum exhibition.

## **Preserving Our Newspapers for Future Generations**

Organization: Carroll County Historical and Genealogical Society  
Project Director: Starlene Lee  
Award: \$2,000

During this digitization project, 15,000 images from Carroll County Historical and Genealogical Society's archival newspaper collection will be scanned, cataloged, and made available to the public.

## **The Record 2020 Printing**

Organization: Garland County Historical Society  
Project Director: Elizabeth Robbins  
Award: \$1,397

Project participants will publish *The Record 2020*, an approximately 180-page yearly journal with articles that explore the people, places, and events that have shaped local heritage. The journal is a major part of the historical society's mission to educate the public about the history of Garland County.

## **Fourth Annual Reimagining Faith & Public Life**

Organization: John Brown University  
Project Director: Amanda Sorensen  
Award: \$2,000

Reimagining Faith & Public Life was designed to model civic discourse that is rooted in historical and social science research. This year's theme, "Seeing Politics Beyond 2020," will be addressed by guest panelists Justin Giboney (attorney and political strategist) and Kaitlyn Schiess (political scientist and theologian). Drs. Daniel Bennett and Trisha Posey of JBU will lead the event.

## **Student Showcases: Arkansan Native American**

History & Arkansan Black History  
Organization: UA Little Rock-Children International  
Project Director: Mya Aung  
Award: \$2,000

The proposed project uses interactive history lessons to enrich 120 1st-5th graders at Bale and Stephens elementary Children International after-school enrichment programs. It ends in a showcase where students present all their humanities projects, with art exhibits and live performances with a virtual option, for their loved ones.

Want to receive a copy of  
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[info@arkansashumanitiescouncil.org](mailto:info@arkansashumanitiescouncil.org)

# Raising Education Achievement and Competence in the Humanities (R.E.A.C.H.) Grants

## **Remember the Classics**

Organization: Cleveland County School District  
Project Director: Bonnie Rogers  
Award: \$ 2,385

Through reading, research and literacy themed activities students will develop lasting connections with the classics. Books selected for the project include classics from different time periods, including the Great Depression and World War II.

## **Exploring Humanity in Middle Level Gifted Education/National Council for Social Studies Virtual Conference**

Organization: Fayetteville Public Middle School GT Program; Owl Creek School  
Project Director: Lindsey Drain  
Award: \$1,008

## **Organization: Fayetteville Public Middle School**

GT Program; Holt Middle School  
Project Director: Tracie Slattery  
Award: \$1,008

This project involves collegial collaboration and professional training in developing a humanities curriculum thread for 5th/ 6th grade gifted students in the Fayetteville Public Schools during the 2020-2021 school year. During the fall semester, four FPS middle school GT teachers will plan and enrich spring semester curriculum studies with an emphasis on our humanity in society. Attendance at the NCSS conference will greatly assist teachers in discovering new resources, materials, and organization contacts to enrich a study of 16 families in different nations around the world, comparing their material wealth, food, economics, and geography. Teachers anticipate rich class discussions on ethics, history, and cultural norms and perspectives. Curriculum studies will also look at fair trade, economic inequities, and sustainability practices in the world's production of coffee and chocolate and

will examine the history of the peanut and George Washington Carver's contribution to humanity.

## **Storytelling: Tales of America**

Organization: Fayetteville Public Middle School GT Program; McNair Middle School  
Project Director: Jane Keen  
Award: \$ 2,937

The project team will create a storytelling unit with the goal of instilling the importance of sharing stories as a method of preserving culture, recording human experience, and expressing creativity in many forms. From examining iconic photographs to analyzing ballads and historical objects, students will be immersed in tales of the past.

### KEY TO HUGH MANATEE'S CORNER

1. One of his favorite foods was ice cream. (George Washington, April 30, 1789 – March 4, 1797)
2. He was the tallest president. (Abraham Lincoln, March 4, 1861 – April 14, 1865)
3. The president who officially gave the White House its name. (Theodore Roosevelt, September 14, 1901 – March 4, 1909)
4. First left-handed president. (James Garfield, March 4, 1881 – September 19, 1881)
5. Only president who studied to become a medical doctor. (Henry Harrison, March 4, 1841 – April 4, 1841)
6. First president to be born in the United States. His parents were originally from the Netherlands and moved to Kinderhook, New York. (Martin Van Buren, March 4, 1837 – March 4, 1841)

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# Making Virtual Events Accessible and Inclusive

*Melanie Thornton*

*Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach*

*University of Arkansas — Partners for Inclusive Communities*

Have you moved your humanities programming or events online using video conferencing technology? Providing virtual events is a great way to remove barriers to participation for many people during this pandemic and beyond. Following a few simple principles can extend your reach even further.

**Select an accessible platform.** Some video conferencing platforms are more accessible than others. Check the company's commitment to accessibility by visiting their website. You might also consult with an organization that provides information about digital access or notice what platform those organizations use.

**Provide a way for attendees to request accommodations.** When you set up registration for your event, make sure to provide a way for people to request accommodations such as captioning, accessible materials or sign language interpreters. Make sure to also budget for accommodations so that you will be able to provide these services when requested.

**Provide captions proactively.** If possible, it is always better to provide captions even if you do not have a request for captions as an accommodation. Many people benefit from



captions and if you plan to provide the link to the archived event, it will be accessible to anyone who accesses it later.

**Provide materials to attendees in an accessible digital format.** Any slides or other materials that are shown on the screen during your event will not be accessible to blind attendees or others who access content using screen reader or text-to-speech technologies. Sending those materials in an accessible format before the event is a great way to ensure everyone has access to them.

Making these few changes will go a long way toward making your event more accessible. You can learn more about these and other strategies at: <https://exploreaccess.org/virtual/>.