

# HISTORY MATTERS

Fall 2020



Gold Paralympic Victory Medal (reverse)



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Originally founded as an event for British World War II veterans, the Paralympic Games were mostly hosted separately from their Olympic counterparts until 1988, when a trend to have the events located in the same city started in Seoul. International Paralympic organizers and members of Atlanta’s disability rights and healthcare communities wanted to continue the momentum for 1996. At the time, however, Atlanta’s Olympic committee did not believe they could increase their existing budget and scope to include Paralympic preparations.

Atlanta’s Shepherd Center stepped up to support the effort, leading fundraising and preparations. The Olympic organizers agreed to share venues and provide in-kind support. The ’96 Paralympic Games featured a popular advertising campaign and mascot. Paralympic athletes increased their visibility and the disability rights movement made advancements.

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Since 1996, organizers of the Olympic and Paralympic Games increasingly worked together. After the 2000 Games in Sydney, leaders of the international Olympic and Paralympic committees signed a “one bid, one city” agreement. In 2019, the U.S. Olympic Committee officially changed its name to the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee.

This gold victory medal from the 1996 Paralympic Games features the Paralympic logo on the front and reads “1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games” in Braille on the back (pictured on cover.)

*Purchase with funds in support of the exhibition, 2020*

Copeland Hirthler Design, designer Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee, Atlanta, 1996



Photo taken in January 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & CEO

Jocelyn Hunter  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

Sheffield Hale  
*President & CEO*

Unprecedented.

It is a word that is frequently used these days. A year ago, the idea that the United States would be the epicenter of a global pandemic, while simultaneously addressing calls for deep change to dismantle racial inequality, would seem far-fetched. But history shows us that this is not at all unthinkable. 101 years ago, the global flu pandemic ended in the United States. 55 years ago, a young John Lewis and other Civil Rights activists were beaten on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in a shocking though unfortunately commonplace display of police brutality.

As history shows us, our time is rarely unprecedented. What is unprecedented is the unique capacity for each of us to make meaningful change in our own lives in our own time.

Atlanta History Center believes that perspective and historical understanding are crucial to informing this change. We continue to work hard to deliver on our mission of connecting people, history, and culture. We strive to create a better Atlanta, one where we’re more able to understand and empathize with the perceptions and experiences of those around us. We hope that by offering our resources to our community, we might all be able to find our personal ways to make history.

We will be straightforward: like so many non-profit institutions during this time of economic hardship, our resources have become limited. We have had to make difficult decisions to reduce staffing, programs, and other expenditures to weather this incredible storm.

Despite these difficulties, we have continued to be open and available to the public in ways safe to do so. Our staff worked hard to create digital educational resources, curate virtual author talk programs, and tackle strategic and long-term planning to seize this moment for positive change within our institution. We opened a new signature exhibition *Atlanta ’96: Shaping an Olympic and Paralympic City* and completed a substantial renovation on McElreath Hall, including the Woodruff Auditorium. Meanwhile, our dedicated frontline staff show up to work with the determination to make our experience one that is as safe and meaningful as possible for our guests. We are also gathering reflections, stories, first-hand accounts, objects, photos, and oral histories to document this time through our Atlanta Corona Collective initiative.

A key factor in our continued work is our members and supporters. Your support of Atlanta History Center is always appreciated, but it becomes even more so during this time of hardship not only for our institution, but for our community as a whole.

As each of us continues to navigate through this challenging time and looks for ways to be personally involved in meaningful change, we hope that you’ll join us in documenting your experiences through Atlanta Corona Collective, exploring new digital content through our recently redesigned website, taking a stroll through our relaxing Goizueta Gardens, and visiting our socially distant museum.

Sincerely,

*Jocelyn Hunter*      *Sheffield Hale*



# ATLANTA '96: SHAPING AN OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC CITY

At 7:47am Eastern Time on September 18, 1990, the International Olympic Committee made the surprising official announcement from Tokyo: the city of Atlanta, Georgia, would be the host of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games.

Many Atlantans who were living in the city at the time remember exactly where they were when they heard the news. Charlie Battle, a member of the organizing committee present at the announcement in Tokyo, remembers being at a loss for words. Shop owners in Underground Atlanta where celebrations were breaking out remember thinking that the Games would finally make the city. Others remember first hearing the news from their car radios. The memorable front page of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* proclaimed simply “It’s Atlanta!”. A notable quote followed on that page that still speaks to audiences today and the city’s sports history: “We finally won something!”

On the 30th anniversary of this electric moment, Atlanta History Center unveiled a new signature exhibition: *Atlanta '96: Shaping an Olympic and Paralympic City*. Many years in the making and delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the new signature exhibition is now open with increased safety measures and expanded online content. The exhibition features touchless interactive elements to protect guest safety.

The story of the '96 Games is not one of a single moment in time, but rather one that continues a long legacy of urban growth and change in the Atlanta metropolitan region, and one that connects Atlanta to a network of other host cities across the world. The Games had varied and deep impacts on the lives of many people from different backgrounds, including athletes, organizers, volunteers, residents of neighborhoods impacted by venues, community activists, and the more than 2 million people who attended the events in person.

Examining large civic undertakings, like the '96 Olympic and Paralympic Games, highlights the effects of community members working together towards a common goal and the ripple effects of big projects. Through this exploration of urban change, international sport, public-private partnership, and social activism, *Atlanta '96* asks us to think about how change happens. How can we change the places in which we live? And, what are the changes that we want to see next?







**ABOVE** The '96 Games broke records and realized new goals. More than 10,000 athletes from 197 countries participated in the Olympic Games. More than 3,800 athletes represented 104 countries in the Paralympic Games. Twenty-four countries sent representatives to the Olympic Games for the first time and all 15 ex-Soviet republics participated independently.

Participating athletes lived in the Olympic Village on Georgia Tech's campus during the '96 Games. The Village was more than just a place to sleep. Athletes ate and socialized there, creating a temporary home for a vast international community.

This five-panel relief map of the world stood in the Village during the Olympic Games with paint and brushes lined up in front of it. Athletes added to the mural over the course of the Games, slowly covering the entire surface with colors, signatures, doodles, and personal messages.

Here are a few things to look for:

Can you find Olympic swimmer and 1996 Olympic torchbearer Janet Evans' signature?

What about Izzy? Can you spot him?

How many pictograms do you see?

What country's flags can you find?

Where is George?

**CAPTIONS FROM PAGE 5** **1** Izzy, mascot of the 1996 Olympic Games, Stuffed animal Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, circa 1996 Gift of Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation, 2002 **2** A chart shows how sponsorship money was spent during the Games. **3** Centennial Olympic Cauldron, Artist's model, Siah Armajani, 1994 **4** Track spikes from the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials Michael Johnson (Olympian, U.S.A.) Nike, Inc., Beaverton, OR, 1996 Gift of Michael Johnson, 2010 **5** Olympics Out of Cobb t-shirt signed by organizers, July 24, 1994, Fruit of the Loom, Bowling Green, Kentucky, circa 1994, Gift of Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History Thing, 1997.



# A CHAT WITH CURATOR SARAH DYLLA



What was the most exciting realization for you during the development of the exhibition?

The opportunity to sew the story of the Games into recent history was truly exciting, illuminating topics of housing and urban history, social history and legislative priorities of the 1990s, inclusivity in sport, early implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the birth of the commercial Internet, all wrapped up in the story of how the Games came to be. The breadth of the narrative encourages visitors to see sports history as holding relevance beyond the events themselves.

Do you have a favorite moment from the Games?

Choosing one moment is hard. I am always drawn to what are perhaps the lesser known stories and achievements that represent how the roles of athletes intersect with broader historical narratives, politics, and culture. In 1996, there were so many examples of this: Josia Thugwane, gold medalist in the marathon, was the first Black athlete to win a gold for South Africa. Or those in 1996 who added to the long list of athletes who broke barriers and expectations by competing in both the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Or the U.S. women's basketball team, whose success and popularity contributed to establishment of professional leagues. It means more to me to watch these moments or performances knowing the different impacts they had beyond the medals won.

What do you think the '96 Olympic and Paralympic Games mean to Atlanta today?

Hosting these Games put Atlanta in a club, of sorts—a club of cities across the world that share a similar history—cities that contributed important moments to history books and sports records, but also cities that sought out the global stage, that saw injections of resources for preparations, that raced a countdown clock to be ready for the Opening Ceremony, and whose residents took part and reacted to this process along the way.

This story provides a condensed example of how change works in cities and communities, and all the different actors at play. If we see this perspective and study past decisions and impacts, it can help us decide how we each want to get involved with the places we live and the change we want to make.



# ATLANTA '96 ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Planning the Games during the rise of the global Internet, Atlanta's Olympic organizers worked with technology providers to make the '96 Games networked like never before and revolutionize the role of technology in sport. The exhibition highlights this era of new hurdles through physical and digital artifacts.

In that same spirit, *Atlanta '96* is accompanied by a new web portal that allows guests to take a deeper dive into the Games prior to visiting the exhibition. On Atlanta History Center's redesigned website, discover glimpses into the vast collections, including Olympic torches and medals, documents from the bid process, snapshots of the Paralympic efforts, and ephemera from the many social movements and civic efforts that were sparked by the city's Olympic attention.

*Major support of this exhibition has been generously provided by James M. Cox Foundation, Marine and John Fentener van Vlissingen, Bank of America, The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, The Coca-Cola Company, Martha and Billy Payne, The UPS Foundation, Martie and Dennis Zakas, and The Rich Foundation.*



# ATLANTA CORONA COLLECTIVE

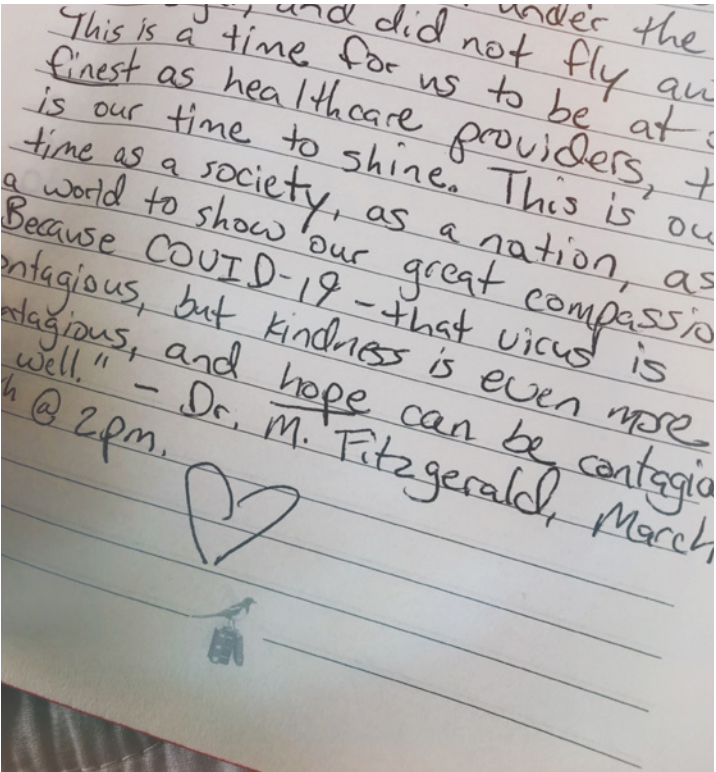
What is it like to live in the Atlanta metro area during the time of COVID-19?

We’re relying on our audience to help us find out through the Atlanta Corona Collective.

There is little doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic and the waves of protests against racial injustice will be part of future history books. Often, when historians are examining these types of moments, there are gaps in the historical record about what daily life was like for multiple different groups of people. The Atlanta Corona Collective asks community members to help Atlanta History Center aid future historians by providing firsthand accounts, artifacts, written materials, images, interviews, or really anything else that helps explain how the pandemic and moments of social change affect our lives.

Everyone has a story to tell, and we all contribute towards creating the history that future generations will study. The Atlanta Corona Collective is an online platform located at atlantahistorycenter.com that seeks to document a broader historical story.

Here are a few of the hundreds of submissions received so far. Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit their own.



## A Healthcare Worker’s Diary

Healthcare worker Kelli Hardin from Woodstock, Georgia documents the impact on her daily routine during the early days of the pandemic outbreak in the United States.



## A Daily Chess Match

87-year-old Grandpa Les enjoys a daily chess match with his 9-year-old grandson, Kenzo.



## Excerpt from “Missing the Ritual of Grief”

*Lee Wilder recounts the experience of planning a funeral for a dear friend during the onset of COVID-19.*

“The raw grief was amplified by the realization that the original plans were unrealistic. The pastor did not feel comfortable flying in for the service. A large reception at the home was out of the question. The number of people at the service had to be drastically limited. Two of us with no obvious credentials had to plan and “do” the service.

[...]

Every day since [the funeral], I have considered how many families have been denied this important ritual.

## There is something so vital about communal grieving.

Rituals such as sitting shiva are designed to comfort the bereft. Memorial services are designed to honor the one who has been lost and to publicly support the bereaved.

The cost of the coronavirus can be measured in lives lost but also in the lost rituals of grief.”





# TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS EXTENDED

In March 2020, like many other institutions, Atlanta History Center temporarily closed due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic. The institution reopened to the public with increased safety measures, including required face coverings, timed ticketing, and capacity limitations, in July. Two temporary exhibitions have been extended to allow interested guests time to visit.

*Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow* has been extended until February 28, 2021. New-York Historical Society organized the traveling exhibition, which Atlanta History Center staff enhanced with substantial material for its Atlanta showing. Learn about the fight for Black equality, inclusion, and resistance to Jim Crow segregation laws. Despite legislative barriers, Black Americans in the era of Jim Crow created robust educational institutions, fought to regain voting rights lost after Reconstruction, and donned the uniform to fight for the United States during major wars, including World War I. Explore the founding of Atlanta’s Historically Black

Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), an innovative center of Black higher education in the United States, and see art pieces created by African American artists in a specially-curated Atlanta section. Also on display is the 127th Regimental Flag of the United States Colored Troops (USCT), a segregated regiment that fought for the United States during the Civil War. This rare example of a USCT banner was painted by renowned Black artist David Bustill Bowser.

Also extended due to the pandemic is *Any Great Change: The Centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment*. This temporary exhibition commemorates the passage of the 19th amendment, which granted women the right to vote, and explores how women have fought to gain full and equal access to the vote, as well as how they have used their political power since. Curated by Atlanta History Center Senior Vice President of Guest Experiences Jessica VanLanduyt, the exhibition is installed inside the historic Swan House, the former home of suffragist Emily Inman. The exhibition will be on view until December 31, 2021.

*Interested visitors may review safety information and reserve timed tickets at [atlantahistorycenter.com](http://atlantahistorycenter.com).*

*Lead support for Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow provided by National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor. Major support provided by the Ford Foundation and Crystal McCrary and Raymond J. McGuire. Lead local sponsors are The Rich Foundation, Victoria and Howard Palefsky, and The Thalia and Michael C. Carlos Foundation.*

*Funding for Any Great Change, as well as the chair lift installation, was generously provided by Emily Bourne Grigsby.*

**TOP** *The final section of Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow focuses on Atlanta stories, including information about Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and art.*



# HISTORY IS MADE BY US

**TOP** *As its contribution to wishes of historical figures, Atlanta History Center submitted this wish from Grace Towns Hamilton. Grace Towns Hamilton was the first African American woman elected to the Georgia General Assembly. When she took office in 1965, she was one of six Black elected officials to enter the lower house since the end of Reconstruction in 1877. An outspoken citizen, Hamilton served as the executive director of the Atlanta Urban League for eighteen years. One of the first women to hold the position, she bucked tradition and chose to wage intensive campaigns against segregation, healthcare inequalities, and educational disparities across Atlanta. During her eighteen-year career as a Georgia legislator, she worked to expand representation of Black Georgians in local and state government. When she left office, the representation of African Americans on the Atlanta City Council was commensurate with their proportion of the population. Heralded for her promotion of interracial cooperation, she was known as a highly effective legislator.*

## What is your wish for America’s future?

This is the question that Made By Us asked of the younger generation in its first activation, My Wish for U.S.

Made By Us is a collaboration including more than 80 history and civics organizations dedicated to the goal of inspiring today’s younger generations to pursue change. In preparation for the 250th anniversary of the United States, Made By Us encourages people of all ages, but especially members of the Millennial and Gen Z cohorts, to envision what they want the next 250 years to look like, and to concentrate on getting involved to make that vision a reality.

“My single and continuing interest has been in making the structure of the government more equitable.”

Grace Towns Hamilton, 1985

My Wish for U.S. is a digital activation that kicks off this initiative by asking people to share their ideas about America’s future. Included in these shared wishes are the wishes of historical figures, showing moments of historical inspiration of when previous generations sought to create a better country.

In addition to this activation, the initiative also connects with audiences through vibrant social media channels and other offerings, such as a series of free online virtual workshops.

Atlanta History Center became a founding partner in this important collaboration to help shape the initiative, committed to the idea that a more nuanced understanding of our past can help create a more informed and productive future.



# MUSEUM EDUCATION GOES VIRTUAL

BY CLAIRE HALEY

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly changed the way that many people work, go to school, and generally live their lives.

With schools across the country pivoting to virtual learning and adapting in-school classes to social distancing and other public health guidelines, Atlanta History Center also pivoted to make sure that our popular school tours are well-suited to these changing times in education.

School children are one of the largest constituencies served by Atlanta History Center. To create engaging virtual experiences, Atlanta History Center sought funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and received a \$293,947 grant. Atlanta History Center’s proposal was one of only 14% funded by these grants and the only project in Georgia chosen by the prestigious program.

“The silver lining of the pandemic is that it pushed our department to dig deeper by finding more meaningful, creative and interactive strategies to meet the needs of students within diverse learning settings,” said Shatavia Elder, Vice President of Education, “The NEH grant provided us the financial flexibility to unleash our creativity and think critically about our role and contributions to this generation of student learners.”

Atlanta History Center’s education staff got to work, researching best practices for virtual learning and adapting two school tours in high demand by educators—*Fight For Your Rights*, an exploration of the Civil Rights Movement, and *Stories After the Battle: The Cyclorama and How We Remember*, which focuses on post-Civil War Reconstruction and the power of historical memory in shaping how we view the past.

Virtual learning allows new possibilities for school groups who had not previously been able to make the trip to Atlanta History Center. Through this new format, and by leveraging free Title One school tours, educational staff seek to engage with students across Georgia, and beyond.



**1** Weston Manders, contractor, records Educational Facilitators for school tours. **2** Educational Content Creator Damian Lockhart films Educational Facilitator Olajuwon Grady. **3** Meg Harkins, Educational Facilitator, records a portion of the *Fight For Your Rights* virtual tour.



“For the first time, we’re able to extend our school tour offerings to places that are beyond a day trip’s distance from our campus,” said President & CEO, Sheffield Hale, “Our school tours are well-researched, engaging, and effective. It’s exciting that these tours can now be available to more students, including those who are not in a traditional classroom setting, as so many are right now.”

Virtual school tours begin with a teacher’s guide that takes place prior to the live session, including components such as quizzes and activities. The live session includes performance-based interpretation, such as vignettes and monologues, performed by Atlanta History Center staff members, as well as live Q&A and instruction facilitated by trained Atlanta History Center staff members. Each tour finishes with a synthesis activity to help students discuss what they learned.

Using the grant funding from the NEH, certain portions of Atlanta History Center’s archival collections will be digitized to support these tours, making them available to the general public as well. Atlanta History Center’s Education team will also develop materials detailing best practices and learning from this process, helping to inform future improvements to the program and resources for other institutions that are looking to make the shift to virtual tours.

Virtual school tours are an innovative way to meet the needs of a critical segment of our community during a time of social distancing and the inability to take traditional field trips. Though the pandemic will pass, this way of expanding our ability to connect with students around the country is a likely permanent addition to Atlanta History Center’s educational offerings.





# 5 PERENNIAL PLANTS FOR POLLINATORS

BY SARAH ROBERTS

Many are aware of the alarming worldwide decline in bee and butterfly populations, but we can all lend a hand with a few simple steps. First, avoid mosquito sprays which kill indiscriminately. Second, plant your garden space with perennials, or an oak tree if there’s room. Perennials will come back yearly and provide nectar, pollen and habitat to a variety of beneficial insects. In addition to flowers, host plants are necessary for feeding the larval stages of some insects—such as the monarch caterpillars that eat only foliage of milkweeds (*Asclepias* species).

Recent studies indicate that gardens of any size, even just patio containers, combine as a vast network, creating a healthier ecosystem from urban balconies to suburban neighborhoods. Here are five easy-to-grow plants included in the new Entrance Gardens:

1. [Purple coneflower–\*Echinacea purpurea\*](#)

More than 100 cultivated varieties (“cultivars”) of this native wildflower exist, but the straight species and the selection ‘Magnus’ were found to be most beneficial to pollinators in recent research, with their abundant and high-quality nectar. Purple-pink, daisy-shaped blooms surround a bristly orange cone atop 2-4’ tall stems from early summer to early fall. Grows best in full sun, moist to dry soil. After pollination, the petals will fall and the dark cone remains upright through fall, filling with seeds that are a favorite of goldfinches.

2. [Calamint–\*Calamintha nepeta\* var. \*nepeta\*](#)

This undemanding perennial hosts a bevy of pollinators in a fascinating frenzy during its extraordinarily long bloom season - June to October. It is not native to the US, but neither are the legions of honey bees that visit every day. Masses of tiny white to pale blue flowers grace loosely upright stems to create a frothy 2’ wide mass that suppresses weeds. Needs full sun, average to dry soil, and good drainage. Tuck spring flowering bulbs between plants, the growing foliage will hide bulb leaves when they die back after blooming.

3. [Coastal plain Joe pye weed–\*Eupatorium dubium\* ‘Little Joe’](#)

If you have a damp or wet place in full sun to partial shade in the garden, don’t fight it—plant Joe pye. This very compact form is only 3-4’ tall and 2-3’ wide, with huge domes of mauve flowers from midsummer to fall that will be a bonanza of bees

and butterflies, including monarchs and swallowtails. Leave some seedheads for the birds, they use it for nesting material.

4. [Iron butterfly ironweed–\*Vernonia lettermannii\* ‘Iron Butterfly’](#)

This 2-3’ tall and densely branched wildflower has multiple seasons of interest. Rich green, fine-textured foliage covers spring to summer, multitudes of small dark purple flowers open late summer and fall, and white tufts of decorative seed heads catch light all winter. This selection of the species originated in the University of Georgia trial gardens. Grow in full sun, average to dry soil and give it a few years to get to its full globe-shaped form. Attracts butterflies, skippers, moths, native bees and the occasional hummingbird.

5. [Raydon’s Favorite aromatic aster–\*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium\* ‘Raydon’s Favorite’](#)

Asters are among the most beneficial of pollinator plants, providing bounty at the end of the season when pickings are slim for a broad spectrum of pollinators. This native, late-season star is covered in daisy-shaped, lavender-blue flowers in mid to late fall, supporting many butterfly species, skippers, honey bees, and native bees. Prefers full sun, average to dry soil, and is adaptable to clay and drought. It will create a sturdy 3’ mound of narrow foliage that is fragrant when crushed.

These selections are a handful of the beautiful and beneficial plants included in the Entrance Gardens landscape. Inspired by the New Perennial Movement and adapted to suit the local conditions, this garden was created as an ecologically beneficial landscape in a contemporary naturalistic design.

Check out this regional plant list put together by the Xerces Society for more ideas: [Pollinator Plants: Southeast Region](#).

**1** *Echinacea purpurea* ‘Showoff’ (purple coneflower) and *Eryngium yuccifolium* (rattlesnake master) with swallowtail butterfly and bumblebee **2** *Calamintha nepeta* var. *nepeta* (calamint) with honey bee **3** *Eutrochium dubium* ‘Little Joe’ (coastal plain Joe pye weed), **4** Iron butterfly ironweed–*Vernonia lettermannii* ‘Iron Butterfly’ **5** Raydon’s Favorite aromatic aster–*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium* Raydon’s Favorite’ with *Panicum virgatum* ‘Cape Breeze’



# A NEW LOOK FOR MCELREATH HALL

As part of its ongoing commitment to ensuring refreshed and well-maintained buildings, and thanks to the generosity of the James M. Cox Foundation, Atlanta History Center recently completed significant renovations to McElreath Hall.



McElreath Hall is named for Walter McElreath, the man who led the effort to organize the Atlanta Historical Society in 1926 and was the major benefactor of the organization’s endowment. The building was initially completed in 1975, expanded in 1980, and last renovated from 2001-2002. McElreath Hall houses many important components of Atlanta History Center, including the Kenan Research Center, archival collections, the only free exhibition gallery on campus, the Jesse Draper Members Room event space, and the Woodruff Auditorium, the main event space for in-person Author Talks.

The Jesse Draper Members Room received new furnishings, entrance, wallcoverings, carpets, and an updated audiovisual system in a scheme designed to complement the magnificent view into the Mary Howard Gilbert Memorial Quarry Garden. Within Woodruff Auditorium, entirely new seating will create a more comfortable experience for guests attending the many Author Talks hosted in that room each year. New stage draperies, carpeting, acoustical treatments, paint, and updated audiovisual and sound systems were installed.

In addition, the lobby was upgraded with new paint, furniture, and wall coverings. The upper level bathrooms have been renewed, and a companion restroom was added to improve accessibility in the building. On the lower level of McElreath Hall, the work areas where the staff of the James G. Kenan Research Center processes archival materials received new carpet and paint.

Besides these interior improvements, the renovation included replacing the roof membrane with an energy-efficient roof designed to reflect the sun and provide maximum protection to the contents

of the building. This replacement was one of the recommendations from a study facilitated by Southface GoodUse (formerly Grants to Green) and accompanying grant which developed strategies for improving energy and water efficiency within McElreath Hall. The GoodUse grant provided funds to retrofit the building with energy efficient lighting back in 2018. As part of the current renovations, the restrooms in McElreath Hall received touchless plumbing fixtures, which contribute to water and energy efficiency.

Mandy Culpepper Interior Design was assisted by Tom Diehl of DCA Architects on this project. C.D. Moody Construction Company served as the general contractor for the project.

*This renovation is made possible by the generous gift of the James M. Cox Foundation.*

**1** The renovated Member’s Room provides a warm space for private events, including glass doors leading in from the Atrium with a view of Goizueta Gardens. **2** Woodruff Auditorium has been upgraded with new seating and A/V systems to support Author Talks, once they resume in person. **3** The atrium of McElreath Hall welcomes guests with comfortable seating.



When guests enter the Atlanta History Museum, the first thing they see is the Rountree Visual Vault. Thanks to Neva and Don Rountree and their recent support of the Vault, the curved, sparkling glass exhibit space is filled with a rotation of artifacts from the History Center’s extensive collections. These curated selections of artifacts create displays designed to give visitors a small dose of all that Atlanta History Center has to offer from the moment they enter the front doors.

# NEVA AND DON ROUNTREE

BY KATHERINE HOOGERWERF

**RIGHT** *Neva and Don Rountree,*  
*courtesy Picture Perfect Photography*



The donors have strong ties to Georgia and Atlanta. Don was born at Emory; his family has been in Georgia for more than 200 years and includes several generations of newspaper publishers. Don echoes the oft-noted viewpoint that newspapers have recorded the first draft of history. To make the connection to written reporting even more special, he and Neva met in a journalism law class at The University of Georgia. Neva grew up in Atlanta and attended Sarah Smith Elementary and Northside High School. As a child, she remembers her mother taking her to the Cyclorama numerous times because Neva’s uncle, the Yale-educated painter Thomas McIlvaine, painted a portrait of George Gress. Gress purchased *The Battle of Atlanta* cyclorama in 1893, moved it to Grant Park, and donated it to the City of Atlanta in 1898, most likely saving the painting from destruction. When Neva learned about the Cyclorama’s move to Atlanta History Center, she reached out to Sheffield Hale to determine AHC’s interest in retaining and displaying her uncle’s painting of Gress at the new location. She and Don donated exhibition funding for the story of the painting both as a work of art and a medium of popular entertainment. The portrait of Gress is now displayed immediately outside of the Cyclorama in the lower-level gallery. This initial monetary gift, prompted by a personal connection and interest, has now led to their support of the Visual Vault in the Allen Atrium.

While the Rountrees had visited the History Center, the Cyclorama strengthened their connection. Atlanta History Center continues to be a part of their lives, with visits to the museum and frequent attendance at author events, whether in person or virtually. Don notes that, “We support Sheffield and the AHC’s long-term goal of sharing more of its stored treasures, thus our funding of the Visual Vault. We think it’s important that the AHC serves as a community resource and connector, in the same way newspapers have done.” The next time you visit the Atlanta History Center, make sure you stop by the Rountree Visual Vault to discover the current artifacts on display.

Creative Philanthropy

The Rountrees decided to support the Visual Vault through a QCD (qualified charitable distribution), a direct transfer of funds from an IRA (Individual Retirement Account). To learn more about this and other ways to support the Atlanta History Center, please contact Sheffield Hale at 404.814.4020 or shale@atlantahistorycenter.com.

# SUPPORT

Gifts made between July 1, 2019  
and June 30, 2020

2019-2020 Annual Fund  
— Insiders

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Special Thanks

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ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER COVID-19 IMPACT

BY SHEFFIELD HALE

Each end of year issue of *History Matters*, a financial update provides an overview of expenses, revenue, and endowment. This year, as all non-profit institutions and corporations have also encountered, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected and is continuing to affect Atlanta History Center in numerous ways. Among those are financial impacts caused by temporarily closing to the public March 13, 2020–June 15, 2020 (outdoors reopened), and July 3, 2020 (indoor facilities reopened).

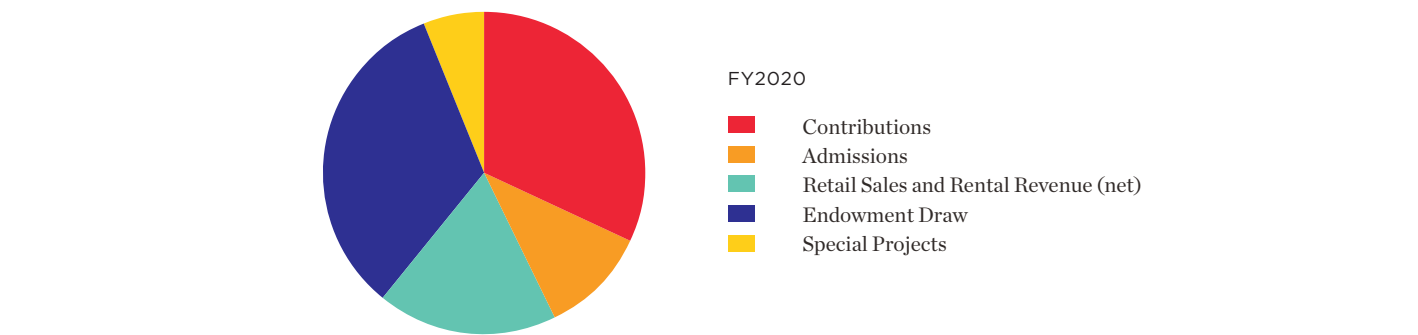
Though all facilities are currently reopened, this reopening includes capacity limitations and timed ticketing, as well as required face coverings. Understandably, significantly less people are visiting. Additionally, the pandemic has caused the cancellation of all school tours, group tours, and large public programs. It has also caused most private event rentals to cancel or reschedule for 2021. The rentals we are currently hosting are significantly smaller than pre-pandemic events.

The full impact of this pandemic will not be known for many years, but we wanted to provide some explanation of the financial data shown on the next two pages. Atlanta History Center was fortunate to receive a Paycheck Protection Program Loan (PPP) from the CARES Act in summer 2020. The PPP loan appears as a large portion of Contribution Revenue due to the forgivable nature of the loan. This loan enabled Atlanta History Center to delay making budget cuts and keep our full staff employed into the summer before having to make the inevitable reductions in programs and full and part time staff. The institution had to reduce fulltime staffing by more than 15% and funding for several areas to offset some of our financial losses and reduce our expense structure going forward.

Atlanta History Center has a planned operational deficit projected for the end of FY21, but is fortunate to have accumulated surplus planned for a rainy day that supplements the forgiven PPP loan, allowing us some breathing room. It is raining. We are working hard to reduce the deficit so that we will be able to grow once the pandemic ends. As always, we are grateful to all of our donors for their support of our mission and activities.

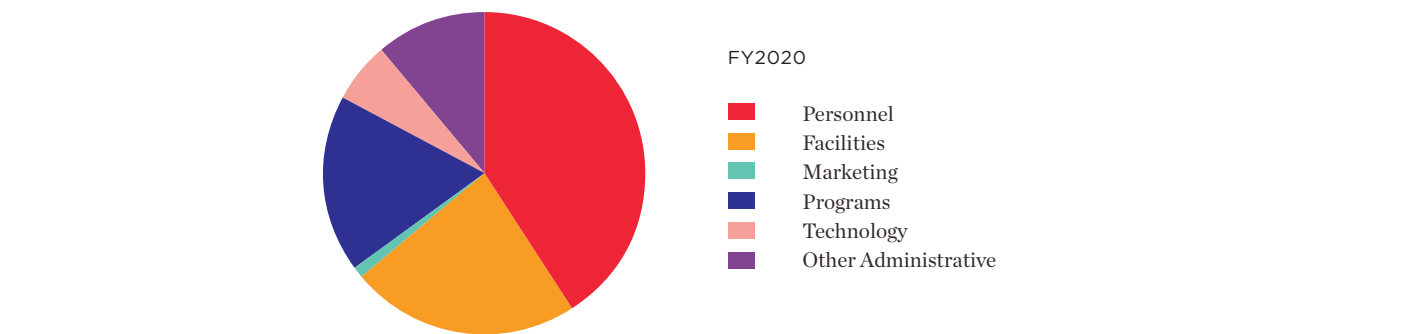


FY2020 Operating Revenue with 5 Year Data



		FY2016		FY2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020	
	Contributions	\$1,606,131	18%	\$1,925,257	22%	\$1,962,070	20%	\$2,713,756	25%	\$3,404,134	32%
	Admissions	\$1,073,139	12%	\$1,146,584	13%	\$1,254,848	13%	\$1,619,377	15%	\$1,178,167	11%
	Retail Sales and Rental Revenue (Net)	\$1,726,132	20%	\$1,896,613	21%	\$1,980,364	21%	\$2,376,507	22%	\$1,863,426	18%
	Endowment Draw	\$3,859,390	44%	\$3,855,959	44%	\$4,059,771	42%	\$4,105,301	38%	\$3,492,297	33%
	Special Projects	\$490,150	6%	\$14,498	0%	\$385,731	4%	—	0%	\$661,300	6%
	Total Operating Revenue	\$8,754,941	100%	\$8,838,909	100%	\$9,642,784	100%	\$10,814,940	100%	\$10,599,323	100%

FY2020 Operating Expenses with 5 Year Data

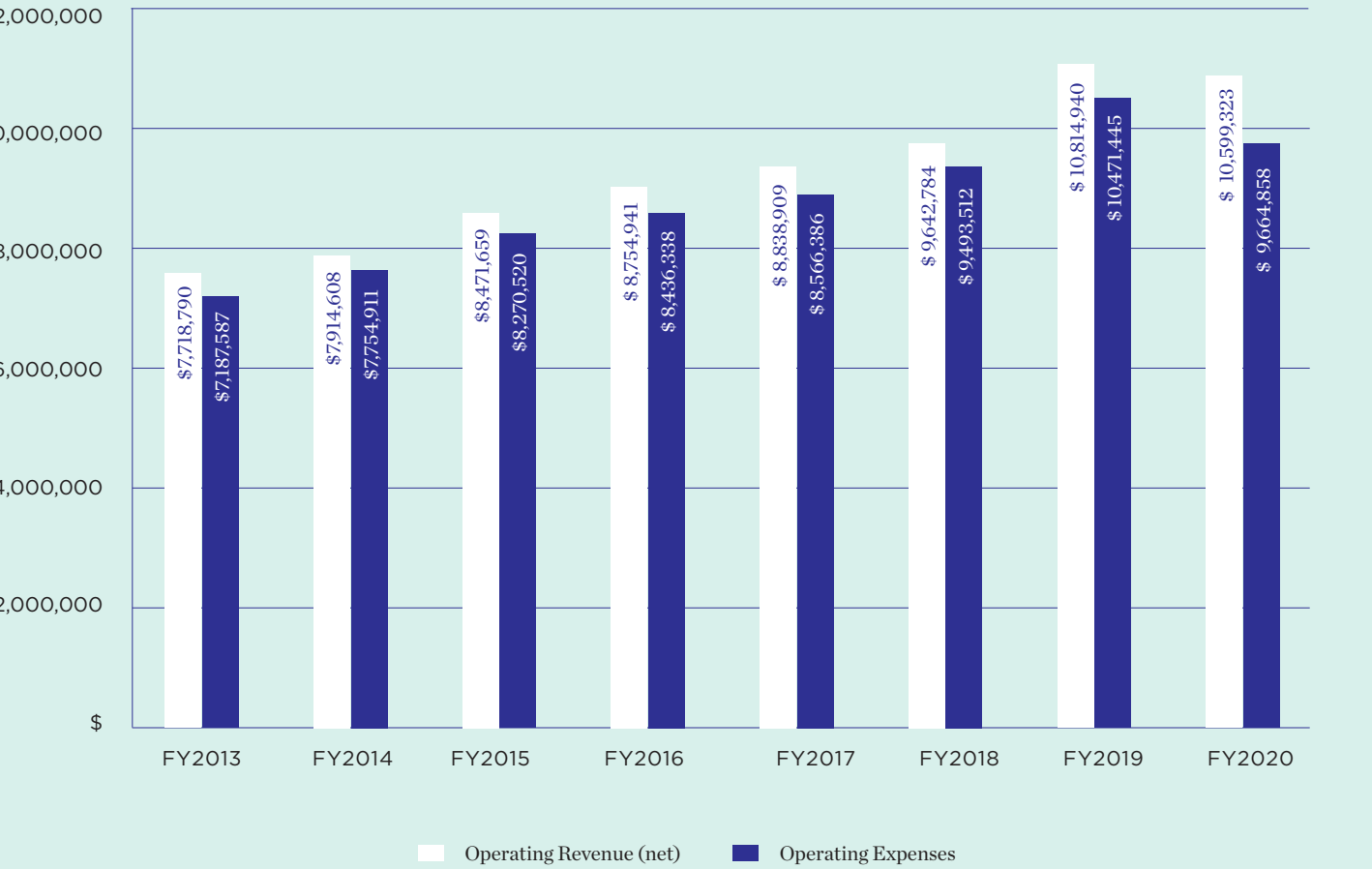


		FY2016		FY2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020	
	Personnel	\$3,471,530	41%	\$3,586,487	42%	\$3,903,435	41%	\$4,356,565	42%	\$3,997,675	41%
	Facilities	\$1,895,808	22%	\$1,883,564	22%	\$1,984,639	21%	\$2,135,719	20%	\$2,248,096	23%
	Marketing	\$175,412	2%	\$228,321	3%	\$176,092	2%	\$185,038	2%	\$64,475	1%
	Programs	\$1,553,821	18%	\$1,456,648	17%	\$1,813,767	19%	\$1,672,661	16%	\$1,694,534	18%
	Technology	\$381,713	5%	\$384,844	4%	\$391,375	4%	\$518,404	5%	\$574,363	6%
	Other Administrative	\$958,053	11%	\$1,026,522	12%	\$1,224,203	13%	\$1,184,109	11%	\$1,085,714	11%
	Special Projects	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	\$418,950	4%	—	0%
	Total Operating Expenses	\$8,436,338	100%	\$8,566,386	100%	\$9,493,512	100%	\$10,471,445	100%	\$9,664,858	100%

Atlanta History Center Endowment

Fiscal Year	FY2019	FY2020
AHC Managed	\$74,025,970	\$68,527,247
Irrevocable Beneficial Trust	\$8,363,910	\$7,832,300
Total	\$82,389,881	\$76,359,547

AHC Operating Revenue & Expenses



Complete Form 990s and audited financial statements can be found at [www.atlantahistorycenter.com/about-us#governance](http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/about-us#governance)





# NEW ART UNVEILED



Atlanta History Center recently unveiled two new works of public art: one located off Buford Highway, the other located at the parking deck of Atlanta History Center.

“Mi Gente” (“My People”), by artist Yehimi Cambrón, represents Latinos who have shaped the growth and progress of the Latinx community in Atlanta. It is located at NCG Cinemas at Northeast Plaza on Buford Highway, and was completed as part of a collaborative Atlanta History Center effort with community partners Latino Community Fund, Freedom University, the Latin American Association, NCG Cinemas, Northeast Plaza, and Plaza Fiesta.

“My goal is to capture what we find beautiful and powerful about our community,” Cambrón said of “Mi Gente,” “but also to capture a landscape that challenges us to be truly inclusive of other voices and identities within our community.

“There is no one narrative for any group of people, and that is a beautiful thing.”

The other work of public art is located at Atlanta History Center on the walls of the parking deck. Created by Atlanta History Center designer Jordan Conner and painted by The Loss Prevention, the expansive mural is inspired by the 1996 Olympics Quilt Of Leaves. The design echoes Atlanta History Center’s mission to bring Atlanta’s different voices together into one vibrant story.

“It was important for me to create a piece that was evocative for people, whether they were familiar with the Quilt of Leaves or not,” said Conner. “I designed the mural to appeal both to people with first hand experiences with the Atlanta Games, and for those who see the ‘96 Games as retro. The overall result is a community artwork that echoes the history and nostalgia of the 1990s, while exploring the legacy of the Olympic Games.”

1 Curious to learn more about “Mi Gente”? Use the app located at Atlanta History Center’s website to explore the vignettes in both Spanish and English.  
2 Atlanta History Center’s new mural welcomes guests to 33 acres of history.

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