

CANAL GATOR TALES

April 2022

Our Friends, Fundraising, and the Future

We had a very successful Spring Luncheon and joint meeting with the Panama Canal Society in late March, and we were very happy that so many of you were able to attend. During the luncheon, we shared the exciting news that in our efforts to raise funds to support the Panama Canal Museum Collection we **recently passed the \$1 million mark!** As of February 2022, we had successfully raised \$1,125,025 for all PCMC endowments and funds, including cash gifts of \$1,040,525 and outstanding pledges and bequests of \$84,500. These gifts were made starting in 2010 when we first began negotiations between UF and the Panama Canal Museum which led to the merger in 2012. It's certainly appropriate that we achieved this remarkable milestone in 2022 when we are celebrating our tenth anniversary of the PCMC at UF.



This milestone clearly demonstrates that our incredible donors are committed to ensuring that the PCMC is supported for years to come. Between 2010 and 2022, 589 unique donors made 1,849 gifts to support the PCMC. Of course, the [Friends of the PCMC](#) have been leaders in all fundraising activities and have made multiple gifts totaling \$224,351 in the past decade. The majority of these funds were generated by the annual Silent Auction, which requires a considerable amount of volunteer labor to plan and execute, as well as with other activities such as fundraising cruises. But, the Friends make numerous other contributions including soliciting new Friends members, identifying potential donors, and participating in planning fundraising drives such as our current Oral History Campaign

Approximately 43% of the funds raised between 2010-2022 were donated to the Panama Canal Museum Collection Endowment, which is primary endowment that supports all PCMC activities. A little more than 30% of the gifts were made in support of our exhibition program, including contributing to the PCMC Exhibit Fund endowment and supporting the creation of the Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery at UF. Almost 14% of the gifts were made to the Friends of the PCMC Fund, which includes all of our Friends memberships. Although not an endowment, the Friends of the PCMC Fund is crucial because it provides ongoing, broad support for activities such as

hiring student assistants, promoting the collection, and participating in activities such as the Panama Canal Society reunion. The remainder of the gifts were made in support of specialized funds such as the 2014 Anniversary Fund, which supported activities relating to the centennial of the Canal opening, and the Grimison and Scott Library Memorial Fund, which supports digitization of the *Panama American* newspaper.

The endowments are particularly important because they provide funds both now and far in the future that will be used for myriad activities including digitization of objects, acquisition of new items for the collection, conservation treatments to ensure preservation of objects, and exhibits and outreach activities that will raise awareness of Canal history and educate the public about the American era of the Canal. For example, we currently are using funds generated from our endowments to curate multiple exhibitions (both physical exhibits and online), including the new exhibition in the Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery at UF, *The Digging is the Least Thing of All: Health & Medicine at the Panama Canal*. Funds generated from our endowments are also used to conduct oral history interviews, transcribe the recordings, and publish the interviews online. We have 164 interviews available online, which are invaluable resources for researchers and students because they provide unique, firsthand perspectives and stories. These interviews join over 12,000 other items available online in our [Panama and the Canal](#) digital collection, which averages more than 3 million views annually. So, rest assured that the funds we have raised are being put to good use as we expand the collection, increase online access for a global audience, and educate and raise awareness about the history of the Canal.

All of the good work that we do comes at a high cost, though. It takes a small army of staff and students to manage a collection of this size and complexity, particularly a collection that has such a high, steady demand from researchers and educators. The list of activities we need to accomplish - everything from digitization to exhibitions and outreach - is still a lot larger than the amount of funds we have available to make those goals achievable.

It is still early in our anniversary year as we celebrate a decade of PCMC at UF, and we have terrific plans for continuing our successful fundraising activities. We have created a special commemorative 10th anniversary lapel pin available to anyone who donates at the \$125 Gorgas level or above. We are still in the middle of our [Oral History Campaign](#), as mentioned above. Between August 2019 and February 2022, we raised \$122,445, which means we're about half way to our goal of \$250,000.



We've received 90 gifts from 74 people during this campaign, and during Fall 2021 alone we raised \$28,500 including many [Memoriam/Honor gifts](#). We plan to have another mini-campaign in Fall 2022, and we're confident we can raise the remaining funds and achieve our goal by the end of the year. We also hope to establish at least ten new planned gifts, including bequests and living trusts, this year.

We thank you for your past generosity, and we look forward to your continued [support of the collection](#) in the future. For more information about making a gift, please contact Director of Development Sara Piety, spiety@ufl.edu, (352) 273-2505.



SAVE THESE DATES

July 6-10, 2022

Exhibit, Auction and Cultural Seminar at the Panama Canal Society Reunion at the Shingle Creek Resort, Orlando, FL. It's never too early to start identifying items that you would like to donate to the auction! Please contact Mickey Walker Fitzgerald (mickeyftz@aol.com), Carole Miller (czmiller345@gmail.com), or Kathy Egolf (Pankee@aol.com) if you have items to donate or if you want to volunteer to help out.