

# CANAL GATOR TALES

February 2022

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## Spring Luncheon and Exhibition Opening

Our annual Spring Luncheon and joint meeting with the Panama Canal Society is only a few weeks away, and we hope to see you there! The luncheon this year is going to be a bit more action-packed than usual because we are celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the PCMC at UF.

As usual, the Luncheon will serve as the grand opening of our new exhibition in the Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery. The exhibition this year focuses on the history of health and medicine at the Panama Canal. The exhibition title, *“The Digging is the Least Thing of All,”* is a quote from Chief Engineer John Stevens who believed that sanitation efforts and the health of the workers were the greatest challenges of the construction project. Naturally, the exhibits cover early efforts to combat malaria and yellow fever, as well as injuries and other illnesses during construction, but the exhibition also includes topics spanning the 20th Century such as medical research, community care, volunteerism, quarantine measures, and vaccination. A selection of postcards relating to hospitals and health care facilities of the Canal Zone and Panama will be displayed using the MagicBox exhibit case.



Luncheon attendees also will be able to view numerous paintings and drawings by Al Sprague that were acquired in the Fall. These works depict Canal Zone homes, street scenes, and views of the Canal including the Cut and Locks. We have invited donors Al Sprague and Leonard Kujawa to attend the luncheon and say a few words during the meeting. These new acquisitions join dozens of other original works and prints already in the collection.

We also will give an update at the luncheon on our successful efforts to preserve oral history interviews, and we will be displaying quotes from many interviews as table decorations. In fact, we decided to have a little fun with these table decorations. We selected more than twenty paintings and illustrations by Al Sprague and matched them with oral history quotes on related subjects. Attendees will be able to enjoy the works of art while also reading stories and memories of people interviewed over the past ten years or so.

If you are interested in attending the luncheon, please refer to the registration form for PCS members available in the *Canal Record* or contact John Nemmers at [jnemmers@ufl.edu](mailto:jnemmers@ufl.edu). If you are unable to join us at the luncheon, we invite you to visit throughout the year to see the exhibition and visit the collection. We also hope to see you at the Panama Canal Society's Annual Reunion in Orlando in July where we will continue our celebration of our 10-year anniversary of the PCMC at UF with a special exhibit and activities titled "Cheers to 10 Years." We will celebrate the decade's many milestones, as well as acknowledging the incredible achievements of the Panama Canal Museum during its fourteen years of existence.

Thank you for your support over the past ten years, and we look forward to working with you for many years to come.

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**Supporting the Oral History Program**

As we reported last month, we're making terrific progress in achieving our goal to raise \$250,000 for the Oral History program by the end of 2022 and we received over \$30,000 in the Fall. Thanks so much for your incredible support! These donations help us sustain our Oral History program so that we can continue to preserve and share stories of life in the Canal Zone and Panama.

There are many ways you can help this year. Visit [pcmc.uflib.ufl.edu/oralhistory](http://pcmc.uflib.ufl.edu/oralhistory) for information about how to donate funds. If you haven't already, please consider including the PCMC in your estate plans. Planned gifts, including bequests and living trusts, support the collection and oral history activities in perpetuity. As part of our 10-year anniversary of the PCMC at UF, our goal is to establish at least ten planned gifts in 2022. For more information, visit the UF Foundation [Gift Planning](#) home page.



We also encourage you to give a gift in honor or memory of a family member, friend, classmate, colleague, or group because all funds received for [memorial and honor gifts](#) will be used to support oral histories.

If you are attending the Panama Canal Society Reunion in July, you can participate in the Silent Auction held by the Friends of the PCMC because all proceeds will be used to support oral histories. We're always looking for donations of objects for the auction, and of course we hope that you will bid on objects at the auction. We also need volunteers to help manage the auction, so you can contribute your time to support the oral history campaign.

For more information about the ways you can support our oral history program, please contact the Development Office at (352) 273-2505 or [lib-development@ad.ufl.edu](mailto:lib-development@ad.ufl.edu).

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## SAVE THESE DATES

### February 26, 2022

Panama Canal Society Meeting and Space Coast Picnic at the Kelly Park East, Merritt Island, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm. Please bring to Mickey Walker Fitzgerald any items you would like to donate to the 2022 silent auction to support the PCMC.

### March 26, 2022

Panama Canal Society/Friends of the PCMC Spring Luncheon and opening of the new exhibition on health care in the Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery, Smathers Library, Gainesville.

### 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](mailto:mickeyftz@aol.com)), Carole Miller ([czmiller345@gmail.com](mailto:czmiller345@gmail.com)), or Kathy Egolf ([Pankee@aol.com](mailto:Pankee@aol.com)) if you have items to donate or if you want to volunteer to help out.

