

MEET OUR MEMBERS

John Medveckis, PAR90

John Medveckis, member of the Director's Council and former Overseer, is co-chair of the upcoming gala celebrating *The Golden Age of King Midas*.



When and how did you first become involved with the Penn Museum?

I have always had an interest in the Penn Museum, ever since I arrived in Philadelphia 42 years ago. I have a keen interest in Roman history, and so initially I was introduced to Dr. [Stuart] Fleming, who was head of the scientific arm of the Museum. He was working on a project on Roman glass, and I was so intrigued by the resulting exhibition, which was designed in virtual reality from the beginning to the end. In terms of the Museum itself, here we have this great University and extraordinary collection—some say it is second only to the British Museum. In some ways, I think it is one of the great

hidden treasures, not only of this city, but also of this country.

You serve on the boards of some of Philadelphia's top cultural institutions. What stands out about the Penn Museum?

It really is world-class. When you look at its history, the Penn Museum has been involved in some of the most important excavations in the world. So it is really about its quality, its educational programs, its treasures. So much of the Museum's collection comes from the excavations of our institution. Many objects in our collection have special stories to tell, and we know the stories. That is what I find so intriguing and engaging.

Tell us your thoughts on the upcoming gala and exhibition *The Golden Age of King Midas*. What is so exciting about this moment at the Penn Museum?

The gala is going to be quite special. I don't think we've seen anything like this for quite some years. It's so timely, and it will accompany a great exhibition. I mean, everybody has heard of Midas, right? I just think that it's a very exciting event because it really does touch our imagination. We want the gala to be magical.

What does it mean for you to take on volunteer leadership and give to the Museum?

We live in a country where philanthropy is very important for the support of our cultural institutions, quite different from Europe where cultural institutions are supported by governments. Here, we need to give back. We have responsibilities to support education and culture. As an immigrant to this country, I especially feel a responsibility. I could not have been able to reach my modest level of success anywhere else in the world. So I feel an obligation to give back in every way that I possibly can.

Do you have a favorite artifact?

I have many... [this question is like asking] which of your children do you admire most!? The Roman collection comes to mind, as Roman history is of great interest to me. But over all, what I love about the Penn Museum is being seduced by so many beautiful, meaningful objects. There are just so many, and they move us in different ways.