Penn Museum to Award Drexel and Boyer Medals

Regents’ Professor and Director of the Center for Bioarchaeological Research at Arizona State University Dr. Jane Buikstra will receive the Penn Museum’s Lucy Wharton Drexel Medal at a dinner and awards ceremony following a public lecture at the Museum on May 11, 2018. A member of the National Academy of Sciences (U.S.), Dr. Buikstra is credited with forming the discipline of bioarchaeology, which applies biological anthropological methods to the study of archaeology. Her international research encompasses bioarchaeology, paleopathology, forensic anthropology, and paleodemography. The author of more than 20 books and 150 articles, Dr. Buikstra is the inaugural editor-in-chief of the International Journal of Paleopathology. She is the president of the Center for American Archeology and has served as past president of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, the American Anthropological Association, and the Paleopathology Association; her recent awards include the American Academy of Forensic Sciences’ T. Dale Stewart Award and the Charles R. Darwin Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Physical Anthropologists.

Established in 1898 by Lucy Wharton Drexel, the Museum’s Drexel Medal is awarded to archaeologists for distinguished work, excavation, or publication within the previous five years. It was first awarded in 1903 to an extraordinary group of archaeologists: W. M. Flinders Petrie for work in Egypt; Frederick Ward Putnam for work in the Americas; Herman V. Hilprecht for work in Mesopotamia, and Arthur J. Evans for work in Crete. Recent recipients are Colin Renfrew (Aegean), Ian Hodder (Near East), George Bass (Mediterranean), and Jeremy Sabloff (Mesoamerica). The award to Dr. Buikstra is the first to an archaeologist in the field of bioarchaeology.

The Marian Angell Godfrey Boyer Medal was established in 1987, the Museum’s centenary year, to honor outstanding service to a Museum supporter. Recent recipients include the late John. R. Rockwell, Museum Overseer; former Overseers Andrea Baldeck and Annette Merle-Smith; and emeritus Overseer and University Trustee Dr. Charles Williams. The Penn Museum is honored to recognize, in its 2018 award, the outstanding service of John J. Medveckis, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Latvia and senior partner at the investment company Cooke & Bieler, Mr. Medveckis served on the Board of Overseers from 2000 to 2009, is a founding member of its Director’s Council, and serves on its Campaign Cabinet. His exceptional efforts as co-chair of the Museum’s first Golden Gala in 2016, celebrating the opening of The Golden Age of King Midas, were a major contribution to the event’s success, and set a high standard for this biennial event going forward.

The Penn Museum is pleased to honor these two outstanding individuals with its highest awards for archaeological work and volunteer service. The medals will be presented at the annual dinner for Loren Eiseley Society members on May 11, 2018.
New Hoonah Indian Tribal Association Partnership

In October, Lucy Fowler Williams and Stacey Espenlaub of the American Section, along with University of Pennsylvania Senior Vice President and General Counsel Wendy White, traveled to Alaska to celebrate a new partnership with the Hoonah Indian Tribal Association. The partnership, formally proposed by the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania in 2009, is an outgrowth of continued work required by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and effectively transfers 41 objects in the Museum’s Tlingit Snail House Collection to the Alaska State Museum in Juneau, where they will be available to the Hoonah T’akdeintaan Clan for ceremonial and educational purposes. The Tribe and Museum have also agreed to work together on future projects that support Tlingit cultural heritage.

Two public announcements marked the historic sharing agreement, one on October 11 at the Sealaska Institute in Juneau and a second on October 14 at a koo.eek or potlatch in the town of Hoonah on nearby Chichagof Island. In appreciation of Penn’s ongoing support of their community efforts and friendship, the Penn team members were each honored with the name of a Tlingit clan ancestor. Three of the objects were hand-carried to Alaska in October and the remainder will follow at a later date.

Shown here at the new Hoonah Tribal House in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, from the left: Robert Starbard, Tribal Administrator of the Hoonah Indian Association; Wendy White, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, University of Pennsylvania; Stacey Espenlaub, Kamensky NAGPRA Project Coordinator; and Lucy Fowler Williams, Associate Curator & Sabloff Keeper of Collections, American Section. Photograph by Gordon Greenwald.

Remembering Mary Bert Gutman

Mary Bert Siegel Gutman, a community advocate and leader and one of the Penn Museum’s most extraordinary volunteers, passed away peacefully after a brief illness in November 2017. At the Museum, she served as an active and emerita member of the Board of Overseers for over 30 years, and as a member of the Women’s Committee for almost half a century. She was the author of an extensive article for Expedition magazine in 1983, as the Museum’s 1987 centenary approached, and played a lead role in organizing countless special events. Ms. Gutman was a passionate advocate for many organizations, and those she chose to devote her energetic activities towards were fortunate indeed.

Mary Bert and Alvin Gutman.
Luncheon Highlights Native American Issues

In October, Associate Curator and Sabloff Keeper of Collections, American Section, Lucy Fowler Williams, Ph.D., and Sigrid Lundby, Vice President and Senior Wealth Manager of BNY Mellon, discussed Native American issues at BNY Mellon’s monthly corporate Diversity Awareness staff luncheon in Philadelphia. The event was attended by more than 40 BNY Mellon employees, who enjoyed lunch including several Native American dishes prepared by Sigrid Lundby’s colleague Helen Henderson. Williams highlighted the Museum’s current Native American exhibitions and projects, and Lundby shared a personal story about her hidden Cherokee ancestry.

New Object Acquisitions

The Penn Museum was pleased to accept several gifts to its Curatorial Sections, Archives, and Learning Programs Collections in the second half of 2017 that are now available for scholarly research, hands-on workshops, or possible display in the new galleries at the core of the Building Transformation project. The next issue of Expedition will include a look at two of these recent gifts: a rare collection of early artifacts from Colombia and Ecuador gifted by Lewis Heafitz, W58, and a fine collection of sculptures and miniature paintings from Thailand, Burma, and India, which was the gift of James E. Bogle, Jr., FA52.

Kathleen Ryan (1939–2018)

We note with sadness the passing of long-time Penn Museum staff member Kathleen Ryan, Ph.D., on January 17, 2018. Dr. Ryan studied archaeology in Ireland and dug at the Iron Age royal site of Dún Ailinne for eight excavation seasons. She left Ireland for the United States in 1972, and became bibliographer for the Museum Applied Science Center for Archaeology (MASCA), later serving as a Research Scientist. Her last position was as a Consulting Scholar in the African Section of the Museum. She became interested in comparative cattle pastoralism, and earned a Ph.D. in ethnohistory from the Penn History Department. Dr. Ryan is best known for her ethnozoological research among the Maasai cattle pastoralists. One of her final papers, "Incidence and Causes of Calf Mortality in Maasai Herds: Implications for Zooarchaeological Interpretation" (K. Ryan and P. Kunoni) summarized this work. We will miss her kindness and warmth.
Penn Alumni Travel Tours Egypt with Museum Staff

The Penn Museum has been pleased to partner with Penn Alumni Travel in hosting several recent tours, but the November–December 2017 trip to Egypt included an exceptional number of Museum participants. Hosted by Associate Curators in the Egyptian Section, Jen and Joe Wegner, and accompanied by Williams Director Julian Siggers, the group included six current and former members of the Museum’s Board of Overseers, as well as other friends and supporters.

Thanks to the Wegners, the group enjoyed visits not only to many of Egypt’s most spectacular monuments and museums, but also a special private tour of the conservation center at the upcoming Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza, where they saw conservators restoring remarkable objects from the tomb of pharaoh Tutankhamun. They visited the tomb of Senwosret III at Abydos, unearthed by the Wegners and their team over the last several years, and were treated to a tour of the living quarters and labs at the nearby dig house, with a delicious lunch prepared by the local house staff.

Museum Welcomes New Public Programs Developer

The Penn Museum welcomes Arielle Julia Brown as its Public Programs Developer. With a background in strategic planning, community engagement, and theatre producing, Brown will support the Public Programs department in establishing new strategic directions. Prior to coming to the Museum, Brown worked with AlternateROOTS as the Associate Producer of Programs and was the 2015–2017 graduate fellow at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University. She holds a B.A. in Theatre from Pomona College and a M.A. in Public Humanities from Brown. Brown is deeply passionate about connecting local communities with the objects and technologies of their ancestors. She is excited to join the Penn Museum staff in this work.

The Penn in Egypt tour group stands between the paws of the Great Sphinx.