



AS IT HAPPENS

SPRING 2024 ISSUE



CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to report an eventful spring at the Chicago History Museum, and I invite you to be a part of our many exciting offerings.



Opening May 18, our newest exhibition *Designing for Change: Chicago Protest Art of the 1960s–70s* highlights how the people of our city have helped shape social movements through art and activism. The exhibition features more than one hundred artifacts and images from the Chicago Freedom, Black Power, anti-Vietnam War, women’s liberation, and gay liberation movements. Most of these objects were drawn from CHM’s collection but not previously exhibited, so you will see them on view for the first time. Also featured are newly acquired works from contemporary Chicago activist artists who are responding to many issues today that parallel those of the past.

Later this year, we’re opening an exhibition that explores the brutal murder of Chicagoan Emmett Till in Mississippi in 1955 and the subsequent trial that acquitted the assailants after the all-white jury deliberated for only 67 minutes. The exhibition includes Franklin McMahon’s original courtroom sketches and photographs from our collection showing Till’s funeral in Chicago. Mamie Till-Mobley’s decision to allow her son’s body to appear in national publications was a visceral exposure to systemic racism—a choice that helped spark the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Till’s story is an important one to continue sharing with our current generation.

A host of programming will accompany both exhibitions along with our third annual Civic Season. I continue to be proud of the team at CHM for doing the work to share the rich but often difficult history of which our city has been a part. This history has shaped new ways of thinking and brought about real change, and we are committed to ensuring that these critical aspects of history are not forgotten as we look toward the future together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Donald Lassere". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Donald Lassere | Edgar D. and Deborah R. Jannotta President and CEO

MAKING HISTORY AWARDS 2024

Join us Wednesday, June 5, 6 p.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel as we recognize our 2024 Making History Award Honorees



For more information and to purchase tickets visit chicagohistory.org/MHA



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30TH ANNUAL
**MAKING
HISTORY
AWARDS**

Top left: Leo Melamed. Top right: Liz and Don Thompson. Center left: Mary Dillon. Center right: Rick Bayless. Bottom left: Guadalupe Arce. All photographs are courtesy of the honorees.

A CHICAGO LEGACY: REMEMBERING MARTHA AND SANGER P. ROBINSON

In 1989, Martha Robinson made a special gift to the Chicago History Museum in honor of her late husband.

The gift of \$250,000, plus additional funding in her will, established the Sanger P. Robinson Portrait Gallery in the Museum's then-Independence Hall Foyer.

The room, constructed in 1932 and designed by notable Chicago architecture firm Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, is a near replica of the "Center Hall" of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The design of the room was meant to complement the building's Federal-style architecture, and the gallery features portraits that are part of a rotating exhibition of works from the Museum's collection.



Martha Robinson attends the dedication of the Sanger P. Robinson Portrait Gallery, September 28, 1989.

The gallery includes a colorized photograph of Mary Rice Livermore, c. 1880 (left), and an oil on canvas painting of Abraham Lincoln by Henry Conrad, 1896 (right).



The room, built in 1932 as a replica of the Center Hall of Philadelphia's Independence Hall, features a large glass chandelier from England, c. 1800. The fixture was originally made for candles, converted to gas, and later wired for electricity.

Top: Martha Robinson at the dedication of the Sanger P. Robinson Portrait Gallery, September 28, 1989. Image restoration by Renee Mudgett, 2023. Bottom: The Sanger P. Robinson Portrait Gallery chandelier, CHM 1932.52, 2023. Photographs by Eric Miller.

A PART OF CHICAGO HISTORY

During their lifetimes, Martha and Sanger P. Robinson were active members of the then-Chicago Historical Society. Martha was a member of the Historical Alliance and a Life Member of The Guild of the Chicago History Museum. They often attended Museum events and, over the years, donated numerous items, including antiques and clothing. In 1970, they gave the Museum a set of ten Tiffany water glasses, pictured here.

Sanger Powell Robinson and his twin brother, Theodore, were born in 1904, sons of Frances Sanger and Theodore Winthrop Robinson.¹ The Robinsons were a prominent Chicago family. Frances was the granddaughter of William Alexander Steel (1836–79), former mayor of Joliet, Illinois, and a limestone quarry operator, and Theodore Jr. was vice president of Illinois Steel, the second largest steel company in the United States. He worked for the company for 43 years, retiring in 1932.

In the early 1900s, Theodore W. Robinson was a leading figure in Chicago, both as a civic leader and philanthropist. As a member of the city's Commercial Club, he helped draft Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago. Eighteen years later, in 1927, he led the effort to straighten the Chicago River on land adjacent to Clark Street. The two-year, multimillion dollar project was an original part of Burnham's 1909 Plan aimed at improving rail access to the city.

Theodore and Frances also loved art, and donated 300 objects of Egyptian artifacts and glassware to the Art Institute of Chicago. Many of these pieces are currently on display as part of the AIC's Theodore W. and Frances S. Robinson collection of ancient Egyptian art.



In 1970, Martha and Sanger P. Robinson donated a set ten hand-blown Tiffany "Favrile" water glasses, c. 1900, with the engraved initials "L.C.T." for Louis Comfort Tiffany.



As vice president of Illinois Steel and member of the Commercial Club, Theodore W. Robinson helped write and implement Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago.

Top: Set of ten hand-blown "Favrile" water glasses, Louis Comfort Tiffany, c. 1900. Gift of Martha and Sanger P. Robinson, CHM 1970.8 A-J. Photograph by Eric Miller, 2023. Bottom: Portrait of Theodore W. Robinson. Gift of John J. Glessner Estate. CHM, Abakanowicz Research Center, 2023. ¹newspapers.com/article/chicago-tribune/93973972/ and home.olemiss.edu/~mudws/family/ssteel.html

A CHICAGO LEGACY: REMEMBERING MARTHA AND SANGER P. ROBINSON CONT.

A CHICAGO EVENT AND WEDDING DESTINATION

Today, the Robinson Portrait Gallery plays host to thousands of visitors each year and is used after hours for a wide variety of gatherings including community partner events, meetings, holiday parties, corporate events, nonprofit fundraisers, and weddings/receptions.

CHM director of special events Lorelei Kroulaidis notes that the Robinson Portrait Gallery, along with the Morse Genius Chicago Room and newly-renovated outdoor patio, make this a popular place for special gatherings—and was recently ranked by *WeddingWire* magazine as one of the top ten wedding destinations in Chicago.

“Many people are surprised when they see this unique setting and are impressed by the beauty of the room,” Kroulaidis noted. “The flexibility of this space means we can accommodate groups of all sizes, and our team can assist with all levels of event planning, including catering, full-service bar, sound, lighting, and décor.”

Thirty-five years after the dedication of the Sanger P. Robinson Portrait Gallery, Martha Robinson would be pleased to know that the gallery honoring her late husband continues to be an integral part of the museum—both as a unique historical room and as a favorite public gathering space for visitors and the community.



To reserve space for your next special event, email events@chicagohistory.org or visit chicagohistory.org/host-an-event

The east doorway of the Robinson Gallery includes ornate wood carvings with the year “1776” that are a close replica of the Center Hall at Independence Hall in Philadelphia.



Sanger P. Robinson and Martha Robinson attend a fundraiser event for the Chicago Boys Clubs at Meigs Field, Chicago, in 1964. Martha Robinson honored her late husband in 1989 with a major bequest to the Chicago History Museum, creating the Sanger P. Robinson Portrait Gallery.

Left: East doorway, Sanger P. Robinson Portrait Gallery, 2023. Photograph by Eric Miller. Right: Sanger P. and Martha Robinson attend Chicago Boys Clubs Summer Gala, CHM Chicago Sun-Times press photo, 1964. The Chicago Boys Clubs was renamed the Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago in 1989.

NAME A BOOK AT CHM'S ABAKANOWICZ RESEARCH CENTER

Make a gift to the Abakanowicz Research Center.

A gift of \$50 or more will allow the Museum to purchase published material for our collection. Published materials make up part of the Abakanowicz Research Center's (ARC) research collection and include both primary and secondary sources that document the city of Chicago, its people, its culture, and its industry. This collection is made available to any visitors to the ARC, which is open to anyone age 6 or older and is always free to visit.

As a token of our appreciation, all supporters who purchase a book will have their name placed on a book plate on the inside cover of the book as well as a line of recognition in the online catalog record.

Help us make a lasting impact for researchers, curiosity seekers, and historians for generations to come.



For more information, contact
Eva Rachau, director of
development, at [rachau@
chicagohistory.org](mailto:rachau@chicagohistory.org) or
(312) 799-2116.

The Abakanowicz Research Center (ARC) holds the Research Collections of the Chicago History Museum, which comprise printed material, archives and manuscripts, prints and photographs, architectural drawings, and assorted ephemera. The ARC is open to CHM members, researchers, teachers, and students. For more information, visit chicagohistory.org/research



Top: The Stacks at the Chicago History Museum, 2023.
Bottom: The Sanborn Maps in the Abakanowicz Research Center, 2023. Photographs by CHM staff.

THE EMMETT TILL MURDER CASE

A new exhibition exploring the story of Chicagoan Emmett Till is set to open this summer in the KPMG and Paul and Catherine Snyder Community Gallery.



Mamie Till-Mobley stands in front of the casket of her 14-year-old son, Emmett Till, at Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ in Chicago. The casket had a glass top so that visitors could see the brutality of the murder.

The exhibition looks at Till's murder, funeral and trial, using original photographs and Franklin McMahon's courtroom sketches from the Museum's collection.

Charles E. Bethea, the Andrew W. Mellon Director of Curatorial Affairs, is curating the exhibition to tell the story of how Till's murder, funeral, and the subsequent trial helped shape the Civil Rights Movement.

"Using original drawings and images from the trial and sobering photographs of Emmett Till's funeral, this exhibition not only attempts to humanize Till, but also tells the story of the courageous actions of his mother Mamie Till-Mobley and others who boldly stood in the face of racism and white supremacy in 1955." Bethea noted, "Through Till's story, audiences will be introduced to the ongoing struggle and violence that Black Americans have faced in their pursuit to enjoy the fundamental rights and freedoms that are promised in the United States Constitution."



Left: Mamie Till-Mobley at funeral service for Emmett Till, , September 3, 1955. ST-17500641-E1. Chicago Sun-Times collection, CHM. Right: Charles E. Bethea, Andrew W. Mellon Director of Curatorial Affairs. Image courtesy of Charles E. Bethea, 2023.

Bethea wants visitors to the exhibition to learn about how Till's case led to demands for justice resulting from the inequities it publicly demonstrated.

"The gruesome murder of Emmett Till and subsequent court case aroused the attention of a nation and became a catalyst for the modern Civil Rights Movement." Bethea added, "The trial not only demonstrates the practice of exposing inequality of equal protection under the law for many African Americans throughout history but underscores the humanity and value of Black lives."

"This exhibit will serve as a testament to countless numbers of unarmed Black and brown men, women and children who have been killed because of systemic racism throughout the country."

– **CHARLES E. BETHEA**, *Andrew W. Mellon Director of Curatorial Affairs*



The exhibit opens **Fall 2024**, at the Chicago History Museum.



A courtroom sketch shows the trial's first witness, Moses Wright, identifying Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam as his grandnephew's abductor. By naming Emmett Till's perpetrators, Wright put his own life in danger.

Bottom: Ink-and-wash drawing of Moses Wright. Courtroom drawing by Franklin McMahon, © Franklin McMahon, 1955. CHM, ICHI-038464.

DESIGNING FOR CHANGE: CHICAGO PROTEST ART OF THE 1960s–70s

Join us for the Opening Weekend of *Designing for Change*,
Sunday, May 19, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Celebrate the opening of *Designing for Change*, which explores Chicago art and design related to five major social movements of the 1960s–70s through the lens of graphic art. The day will include interactive arts-making, expert speakers, guided gallery tours, and more.

The exhibition will feature many never-before-exhibited works of graphic art, photographs, and first-person interviews that explore how Chicago activist artists helped shape the Civil Rights, Black Power, anti-Vietnam War, women’s liberation, and gay liberation movements.



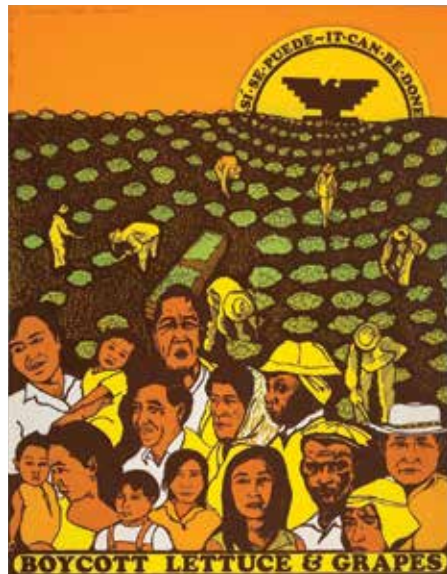
Left: Liberation School for Women poster, Chicago Women’s Liberation Union, c. 1972. CHM ICHI-183503. Right: Women Unite Take Back the Night poster. CHM ICHI-183506.

Among the featured artists are the Chicago Women's Graphic Collective (CWGC), a working group of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union founded in 1970, who sought social change by creating silk screen posters for various progressive issues.

Any member of the collective could suggest a topic for a poster, and they would work in teams to create the design and make the prints.

One print featured in the exhibition is titled *Sisterhood is Blooming*, co-designed by artist Estelle Carol, a longtime activist artist and one of the co-founders of the CWGC. The print features bold contrasting colors of purple and orange combined with the phrase "Springtime will never be the same," which captures the vibrant energy of the women's liberation movement.

As a socialist feminist group, the CWGC also created posters for workers' rights, including this silk screen poster, *Boycott Lettuce and Grapes*, which uses vibrant colors of orange, yellow, and green combined with strong visual imagery to champion a national strike organized by the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) for better wages. UFW co-founders Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez are portrayed in the front and second rows, respectively.



 You can see more of the CWGC's works and much more in **Designing for Change this spring.**

Top: *Sisterhood is Blooming*, silk screen print by Estelle Carol and the Chicago Women's Graphics Collective, 1972; CHM ICHI-176515. Bottom: Silk screen poster, *Boycott Lettuce and Grapes*, by Leslie Nevraumont and the Chicago Women's Graphics Collective, c. 1972; CHM ICHI-176522.

GIVING DAY 3★12

INVEST IN HISTORY. SHAPE OUR FUTURE.

The Chicago History Museum celebrated our fifth annual Giving Day on March 12, in salute of Chicago's original area code 312.

In 2023, CHM welcomed 67,000 visitors, engaged 25,000 students visiting on field trips, educated 1,347 students in 88 education programs, and served 4,400 patrons at the Abakanowicz Research Center.

THANK YOU to all who donated on Giving Day! We're looking forward to making more connections in 2024. Your Annual Fund support helps us connect visitors with Chicago's past and the people whose lives, experiences, and decisions have and continue to shape the city.



There's no time like the present to encourage young minds and invest in groundbreaking scholarship. Make your Annual Fund gift today! Contact Eva Rachau, director of development, at rachau@chicagohistory.org or (312) 799-2116 | chicagohistory.org/give-now

Above: A young visitor paints on a mural as part of CHM's Civic Season program activities, 2023. Photograph by CHM staff.

CHRISTIAN SIRIANO — RENOWNED DESIGNER HONORED BY COSTUME COUNCIL

Siriano Presented with 2023 President's Circle Award at Four Seasons Luncheon.

Christian Siriano, one of the leading designers in fashion today, was recently recognized by the Costume Council for his accomplishments and contributions to the fashion industry.

After winning the design competition show *Project Runway* in 2007, Siriano's career skyrocketed, and his designs have been worn by numerous leading celebrities—from First Ladies Michelle Obama and Jill Biden, to Lady Gaga, Tiffany Haddish, and Whoopi Goldberg.



Recognized for his contributions to body diversity on the runway and red carpet, Siriano was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 Most Influential People in 2018.

The Award Luncheon event was hosted by CHM's Costume Council at the Four Seasons Hotel on October 12, 2023, with 150 Costume Council members and guests in attendance.

Siriano participated in a candid interview moderated by Dionne Williams, creator of *Emerge!* Fashion Show, New York.

Following the Q&A, Siriano was presented the 2023 President's Circle Award by Pamela Capitanini, Costume Council development chair, and David Mordini, CHM trustee and Costume Council president.

Top: Dionne Williams, of *Emerge!* Fashion Show, New York, interviews fashion designer Christian Siriano. Bottom: Pamela Capitanini, Christian Siriano, and David Mordini at the presentation of Siriano's 2023 President's Circle Award. Photographs by Stephanie Daniel.

HAPPENINGS ON THE HISTORY TRAIL

VOLUNTEERS PLANT TREES AT CHM

On October 28, 2023, a group of volunteers spent a brisk Saturday morning planting 22 new trees on the grounds of the Chicago History Museum.

The volunteers from Openlands, the Chicago Park District, and Vivint Security were joined by US Congressman Mike Quigley (IL-5).

Most of the trees were planted in the Museum's backyard along the Richard M. and Shirley H. Jaffee History Trail. An additional eight trees were planted along Clark Street at the Museum's entrance.



COUCH TOMB RESTORATION PROJECT

The Chicago Park District, with the support of a grant from the Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust, has begun restoration of the Couch Tomb.

The structure, a family mausoleum built in 1858 by brothers and hoteliers Ira and James Couch, is the last remaining grave marker standing on what was once a sprawling city cemetery on the north edge of Chicago. The tomb is featured as part of the Richard M. and Shirley H. Jaffee History Trail. When the cemetery land became part of Lincoln Park in 1869, it was likely the family found it too costly to move the impressive structure to another site.

Park District workers' first project was to replace and rebuild a steel entry door that secures the original stone door to the tomb. Preservation consultants then inspected the building to assess long-term repair needs for the 166-year-old stone structure.



Top: Openlands volunteers joined by US Congressman Mike Quigley plant trees at the Richard M. and Shirley H. Jaffee History Trail. Photograph by Terrance Lewis, October 28, 2023. Bottom: Chicago Park District metal workers repair a steel door on the Ira Couch tomb. Photograph by Eric Miller, October 5, 2023.

THE LINCOLN HONOR ROLL SOCIETY — A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Lincoln Honor Roll Society recognizes special individuals who support the Museum in their wills, trusts, life insurance policies, retirement assets, or other estate planning.

Members of the Lincoln Honor Roll Society are invited to sign a commemorative book, recognizing their support of the Chicago History Museum and our mission.

Create your legacy today and be among more than 100 individuals who have committed to supporting the Museum for generations to come.



Top: Abraham Lincoln White House Desk at Chicago History Museum. CHM Photograph, 2024. Bottom: Lincoln Honor Roll Society commemorative book and signing pen. CHM Photograph, 2024.



For more information about the Society and planned giving options, contact Michael Anderson, vice president of external engagement and development, at manderson@chicagohistory.org or **(312) 799-2142**.

SUPPORT CHICAGO HISTORY

Membership Levels


INDIVIDUAL
\$70

- Free Museum admission for one person (one person on the membership)
- Invitations to annual member events
- Exhibition previews and celebrations
- Discounts on Museum tours, programs, and events
- Discounts at the Museum Store, PhotoStore, North & Clark Café, plus double discount weeks
- Monthly member communications
- Access to member-only parking spaces
- First access to *Chicago History* magazine


DUAL
\$80

Individual benefits, plus:

- Free Museum admission for two people


HOUSEHOLD
\$100

Dual benefits, plus:

- Free Museum admission for four people


PLUS+
\$30

Add to any package (except All Star) and receive:

- Free parking during Museum visit
- Reciprocal benefits at more than 1,200 museums in North America through narmassociation.org
- Two one-time passes to share with friends and family (benefit only available at the Dual, Household, and All Star levels)


ALL STAR
\$250
BEST VALUE

Support CHM at a higher level. All Star membership is a philanthropic level that includes a \$120 donation to the annual fund and offers even greater access to the Museum. Benefits include all Household and PLUS+ benefits, in addition to one invitation to a behind-the-scenes experience.

SUPPORT CHICAGO HISTORY

Historical Alliance



ASSOCIATE

\$500–\$999

- Access to the Museum and Abakanowicz Research Center for up to four adults for one year
- Recognition in the Museum’s Annual Report
- Printed *As It Happens* newsletter
- First access to *Chicago History* magazine
- Invitation to two behind-the-scenes experiences
- Discounts on tours, programs, and events
- Discounts at the Museum Store, PhotoStore, North & Clark Café, plus double discount weeks
- Free parking during every Museum visit
- Reciprocal benefits at more than 1,200 museums in North America through narmassociation.org



PATRON

\$1,000–\$2,499

Associate benefits, plus:

- Invitation to one additional behind-the-scenes experience



BENEFACTOR

\$2,500–\$4,999

Patron benefits, plus:

- Private behind-the-scenes tour for up to eight people (on request)
- Invitations to signature events



GUARDIAN

\$5,000–\$9,999

Benefactor benefits, plus:

- Invitation to annual Fourth of July breakfast



HISTORIAN

\$10,000–\$24,999

Guardian benefits, plus:

- Recognition on lifetime giving wall
- Invitation to a white glove experience



PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

\$25,000+

Historian benefits, plus:

- Concierge service: dedicated staff assistance to tailor Museum experiences for you and your guests

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

It is with great honor that the Chicago History Museum recognizes the following donors for their generous support.

Lincoln Honor Roll Society

As of December 31, 2023

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^C | The Costume Council of the Chicago History Museum

^D | The Guild of the Chicago History Museum

^D | Deceased

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Sulzer Family Foundation
Ed Uihlein Family Foundation
Weinberg Family Foundation
The Abra and
Jim Wilkin Fund
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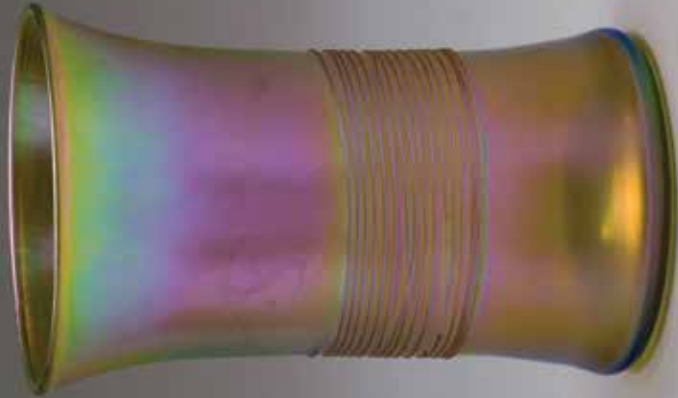
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