



THURSDAY, OCT. 27 FREE MUSEUM EVENT CELEBRATES WESTERN HERITAGE, “SPIRIT OF THE WEST COLLECTION”

SCOTTSDALE — Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West is celebrating the donation of “The A.P. Hays Spirit of the West Collection” to the museum Thursday evening, October 27 with free admission to the entire museum from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., and a special informational presentation in the museum theater by the collection donor Abe Hays. The Paradise Valley resident and retired owner of Arizona West Galleries, 7149 E. Main Street in downtown Scottsdale, will speak on the topic of Western spurs beginning at 6:30 p.m. A dessert reception will follow at 7:30 p.m.

Hays began his one-of-a-kind collection in the 1940s, as a teenager. Today, it includes more than 1,400 authentic Western artifacts including exquisitely tooled leather saddles (some of which date back to the 1800s), rare badges, spurs worn by rodeo stars and working cowboys, firearms, Wild West Show objects, and a “wanted” poster for the arrest of legendary outlaws Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker.

Approximately half of “The A.P. Hays Spirit of the West Collection” was on exhibit on a loaned basis when the museum opened in January 2015. In 2016, several hundred additional artifacts were added to complete the exhibition.

“I feel that the collection is world class,” Hays said. “It draws attention to Scottsdale and Arizona with historic examples of Western lore. For example, there are 125 classic spurs on exhibit that highlight their California and Texas origins, their Wild West Show patterns, rodeo types and trophy spurs, rare prison-made varieties, and spectacular gold and silver Hollywood examples.

“Eighteen Western states are featured in the exhibition for the first time since the museum opened,” he continued. “Examples include 80 holsters and gun rigs, over 50 classic revolvers, rifles and derringers, 80 antique bits, 18 stylish saddles, numerous cowboy chaps, bronco belts, and saddle bags.”

“There have been many wonderful milestones in the museum’s young history but none as meaningful as acquiring its first major collection from Abe Hays — one of the staunchest advocates for the museum’s development since it was a dream of former Mayor Herb Drinkwater, and many other community leaders,” commented museum Director and CEO Mike Fox.

“This gift will not only enable us to share with the public his genuine love, respect and understanding of the West but, by entrusting this unparalleled collection to the museum, he has attested to the institution’s credibility, integrity, and creativity, which elevates the museum in the eyes of other collectors, institutions and prospective supporters.

“The museum is now privileged to serve as a steward of this extraordinary collection, passionately amassed by our longstanding friend, businessman, and scholar of the West,” Fox concluded.

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Mayor W.J. “Jim” Lane said, “Making these historical objects a permanent part of the collection at Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West will help ensure that countless residents and visitors – now and into the future – will have an authentic and tangible understanding of our ancestors’ lives. On behalf of the City of Scottsdale and its citizens, it is with great pride and gratitude that we thank A.P. Hays and his family for this most generous and cherished gift.”

In addition to “The A.P. Hays Spirit of the West Collection,” Scottsdale’s Museum of the West features regularly changing exhibits of Western art and artifacts, plus entertaining events and informative programs that bring our Western heritage to life.

The museum is owned by the City of Scottsdale and its operating manager is Scottsdale Museum of the West, Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization led by Director/CEO Mike Fox and Board Chairman Jim Bruner. Hays is a trustee of the museum’s board of directors.

The museum became a Smithsonian Affiliate in 2015 and, in 2016, was named “Best Western Museum” in the nation by True West, a national magazine based in Cave Creek, Arizona. The museum relies upon private support to fund its operation.

Scottsdale’s Museum of the West is located in downtown Scottsdale at 3830 N. Marshall Way, one block west of Scottsdale Road at 1st Street, near the Main Street galleries.

For more information, visit scottsdalemuseumwest.org or call 480-686-9539.



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