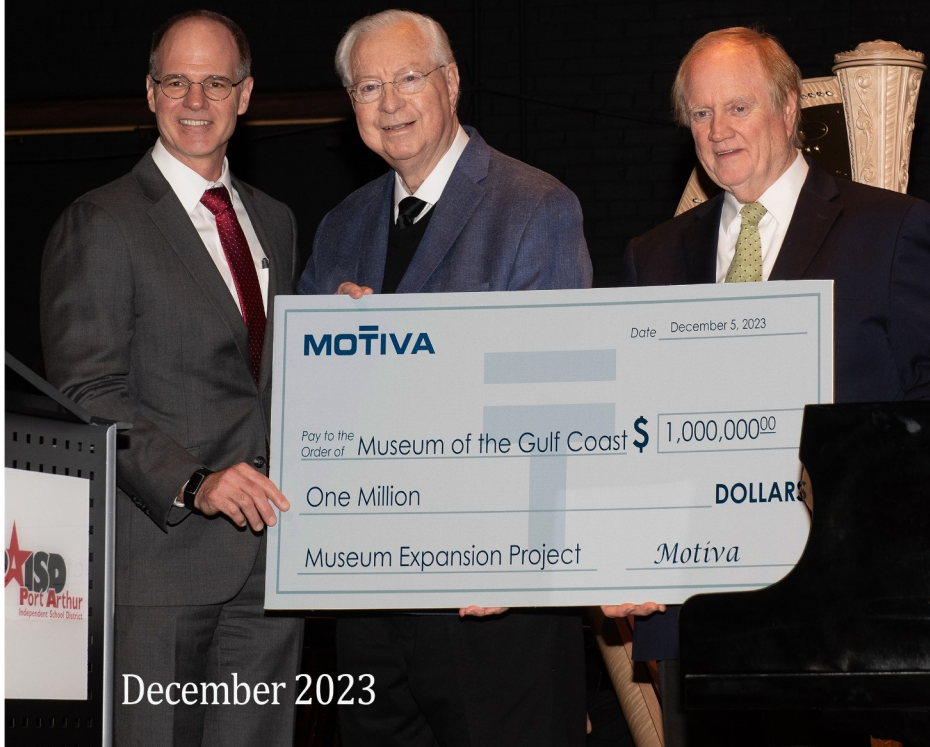


THE LIGHTHOUSE

A PUBLICATION OF THE MUSEUM OF THE GULF COAST

Motiva Enterprises Donates One Million Dollars to the Museum of the Gulf Coast



December 2023

Museum Board

Dr. Sam Monroe, President
Patti Salter, Vice President
Charleen Commings, Treasurer
Sylvia Williams, Secretary
Susan Arceneaux
Bernard Brown
John A. Comeaux
Keith Daws
Ruth Houston
Ed Kestler
Hon. Robert T. Morgan
Dr. Mark Porterie
Ann Boutte Priddy
Mary Ann Reid
Verna Rutherford
Pam Trosclair
Dana Wasser
Bill Worsham
Madelon Goldsmith, Emeritus

Staff

Tom Neal
Director

Mogc.director@gmail.com
Work - 409-999-6281
Cell - 409-720-9912

Robert Fong
Curator/Archivist
Mogc.curator@gmail.com
409-999-6283

Dana Howard
Education/Tour Coordinator
Mogc.educator@gmail.com
409-999-6284

Becky Guidry
Memberships/Museum Store
MuseumoftheGulfCoast@gmail.com
409-999-6282

Charles Robertson
Security Officer

December 2023

CONTENTS



- 3 - from The Director
- 4 - Motiva Pledges Million Dollars
- 6 - Dr. Monroe - MOGC History
- 8 - Radio Station, Charlie is Back
- 9 - Cricchio, West, Worster Pass
- 10 - Memorials
- 11 - Donations

Editor and Layout *Robert Fong*

Distribution *Becky Guidry, Dana Howard*

Cover Photograph *Barb Bragg*

Additional Photography *Barb Bragg, Robert Fong*

Subscribe to *The Lighthouse* by purchasing a membership at MuseumoftheGulfCoast.org/gift-shop
The Lighthouse is a publication of the Museum of the Gulf Coast. Volume 2023.2

Online



MuseumoftheGulfCoast.org



facebook.com/MuseumoftheGulfCoast



Instagram.com/MuseumoftheGulfCoast



YouTube: search Museum of the Gulf Coast Channel

Front Desk Volunteers

Ari Karell, Fred Schneider, Anna Christian, Carolyn Barras, Billie Cole, Renella Primeaux, Charleen Commings, Patsy Snell, Shelly Parsley, Peggy Nichols, Susie Jara **DOCENTS:** *Pam Trosclair, Lucille Armintor, Fred Schneider, Benny Bryan, Rhonda Richie Jane Nielson* **VOLUNTEER:** *Rachel Scott*

from The Director

As 2023 comes to a close, it is exciting to experience the wonders of the Museum. Engaging with our youth and great regional community who find us daily and the visitors from across our great county and around the world is wonderful. If you need to be impressed by what an amazing place we come from, volunteer here at the Museum and witness firsthand the wonder and amazement expressed by everyone who enters our doors daily. Add to that the record attendance we have finally achieved since this side of the pandemic.

One special blessing we received just this month was from our Port Arthur Motiva Plant in recognition of their 120 years of operation in Port Arthur. They celebrated by helping us begin our fund-raising efforts for our New Composite Exhibit and Event Center with a \$1,000,000 gift to the Port Arthur Historical Society DBA Museum of the Gulf Coast. The project's total cost is projected to be \$3.8 million to complete. This gift will help us as we begin to raise additional funds for completion as planned. Polymers/Composite materials



creator and inventor Andy Green continues to be a driving force assisting us with the exhibit. Some funds will also be used to update parts of our current Petroleum Exhibit. Thank you, Motiva!

We are grateful for the Port Arthur LNG grant that helped us update our new inside and outside lighting with the latest LED technology. Another item to highlight is the completion of our new front awning at the entrance of the Museum.

Another radical addition is our new MUSEUM OF THE GULF COAST Streaming/Online Radio Station. Thanks to former Port Arthurian Bob Buckalew, who grew up here and began his broadcasting career here, he is the Benefactor and Operator of the new station.

You will find us online on our website, Alexa, and IHeart Radio. Best wishes for the new year, and we look forward to seeing you soon . . .

Tom Neal

MOTIVA GENEROUSLY PLEDGES ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO MUSEUM!

A dream incubating in Museum Director Tom Neal's head for five years took a big step toward becoming a reality when Motiva recently began eyeing its 120 year anniversary and decided they wanted to commemorate this milestone by generously donating one million dollars to the Museum of the Gulf Coast. Motiva also sponsors a Christmas concert annually at Woodrow Wilson and used that event to make the announcement. On hand to accept the donation were Port Arthur Historical Society President, Dr. Sam Monroe, and Executive Director, Tom Neal.

A computer rendering of the planned addition.

Museum employees and the board of directors were also in attendance for this historic announcement. The symbolic check was presented by Jeff Newman, Motiva's Executive Vice President of Operations, and Claire Jackson, Social Responsibility and Community Affairs Manager at Motiva, before the concert performed by the Symphony of Southeast Texas. The fundraising goal for the new wing is 3.8 million dollars.

Unnoticed by many is the fact that the Museum has a large building attached to it, formerly downtown's Western Auto. We currently use it to store a large number of items that cannot be kept in the main building. In 2017, as work



on the Texas Maritime exhibit began to wrap up, Tom Neal and MOGC Hall of Famer Andy Green began to talk about a much bigger project - converting the unused building into an entirely new museum wing dedicated to the Polymers & Composites industry. Green's contributions to the industry are now legendary. Neal, working with the original MOGC designer, Tony Webber, asked him to come up with exhibits that could be moved on wheels and would enable the space to also host events on a much larger scale than we are currently able. Motiva will also donate artifacts it currently houses that go back to the original Texas Oil Company, which will be used in the new exhibit space.

Dr. Sam Monroe, Motiva's Claire Jackson and Jeff Newman (Executive V.P. of Operations), Tom Neal (Museum Director)

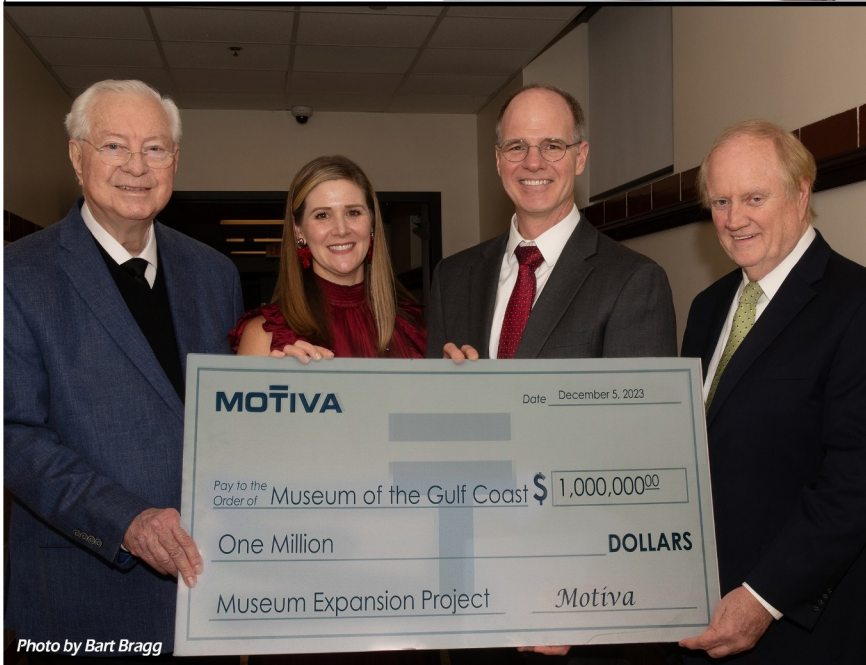


Photo by Bart Bragg

Dr. Sam Monroe Recounts the Early History of The Museum of the Gulf Coast

As the 30th anniversary of the Museum of the Gulf Coast approaches in 2024, the Lighthouse will publish a series of articles based on an interview we conducted with Port Arthur Historical Society President, Dr. Sam Monroe. For us it is a fascinating story by a great story teller. He begins with one of his own mentors...

The Port Arthur Historical Society was organized under the leadership of Mrs. W.F. Fredeman back in 1973, and she was involved in what was known as the Port Arthur Museum committee, which was first chartered by the state of Texas in 1964. The reason for expanding into a larger society with a broader mission was to take on the project of restoring the Pompeiian Villa. The Museum, however, was what really started all of this when a group of ladies at the Department Club wanted to begin a collection of Port Arthur materials and artifacts. Mrs. Fredeman was one of the leaders along with Mrs. Merle Murphy. Those two ladies worked diligently to build a collection of materials on Port Arthur that wound up in a storefront downtown where people could peer through a window as they walked by on Procter Street. When Merchants Bank decided to expand and modernize their building, Mrs. Fredeman and her husband were big customers at that bank. They persuaded the bank leadership to create a space, maybe 350 to 400 feet, for an exhibition that could be set up on the history of Port Arthur. Later it was moved to the Adams building across the street - now known as the World Trade Building, (one of the buildings that Motiva Enterprises is currently remodeling).

That led to a permanent home for a Port Arthur museum. About that same time, Lamar Port Arthur was beginning to need library resources. We approached the city about donating Gates Memorial Library to the college if the voters approved the civic center and the library construction project on Highway 73. As it turned out, the voters did approve those projects, and the city was then required to call another election to donate Gates Library to the college. After some delay, the matter was brought to a vote, and the voters approved the project overwhelmingly. That gave us the space for the college to offer library support materials and services to support the academic and technical arts programs at Lamar Port Arthur. There was a Gates Gallery within the library that the college did not especially need at the time. And so, we allowed Mrs. Fredeman and the Port Arthur Historical Society to come in. We invited them to be there to set up their museum exhibits, and so the Port Arthur museum continued in that space, and by this time, it was 1980. Through a federal grant, we employed Elizabeth Killebrew, and she was our hostess, and people would come by, and she would talk to them. She would get them to sign the register so we'd keep up with visitation so we could report to various bodies that this is an active use of that space.

I vividly remember Elizabeth coming to me and saying we had some people today all the way from Connecticut! I said, "Boy, isn't that great? What were they looking for?" She responded, "Janis Joplin." They wanted to know all about Janis. So, I began to make notes about this, and it seemed to build, and I thought, my goodness, there is something going on here. So I talked to Mrs. Fredeman, who was the President of the Society, and explained to her what we had found. I asked if she would have any objection to us approaching the Joplin family about donating materials for an exhibit on Janis' career. And she let me know that she would not. I knew Dorothy Joplin very well. In fact, Janis' mother and I had worked together at Port Arthur College, where she was the registrar (that was the title she had), but her job was really like being the dean of women and performing a lot of duties as required in that position at a small college. My Dad was President of the College, and she and my Dad had worked together for many years. So, our families had sort of grown up together.

I called her in Prescott, Arizona, where she and her husband had retired and spoke with her, and told Mrs. Joplin what we were trying to do. This was right in time with the Texas Sesquicentennial in 1986, so she was initially very enthusiastic. We wanted to create something that would be a lasting memorial to Janis and her career - to become a part of her legacy. But, it wasn't very long before Mrs. Joplin called me back and said they had to reconsider and were not going to be able to provide those materials to us. She was very apologetic and very emotional on the call.

We went ahead and started putting together materials that we could find ourselves. People who had known Janis in school got photographs, records, and albums at that time and put together an exhibit in Gates Memorial Library. At the same time, we continued to get more and more interest in Janis. I recall one time I was giving this talk at a PTA meeting at Thomas Edison while that school was still operational as a middle school, and there were a lot of kids in the audience. There was a large auditorium in the building, and I remember it vividly because I got up to give my talk, and I had my notes, and there was a light on the podium so I could see my notes. I get up there

and the light goes out right as I start to make my talk. But I did know the talk well enough to give it without seeing my notes. I finally got to Janis Joplin, and I was talking about her growing-up years here, where she went to school (I'd known her in school). Where she worked. She'd worked at Gates Library, and talked about her career in music. Amazingly these kids started to holler, they started to scream, they started to clap. It stopped my talk. I was surprised by it. Like I say, I couldn't see my notes to begin with, so I was kind of off on the wrong foot I guess. But it was quite a significant moment. The idea stayed in my mind that maybe there was something more here that we needed to be doing in connection with her legacy. As time went on we began to do more to try to put things together.

But, the real turning point came when Mrs. Joplin called me and said, "You know we've reconsidered. I'm going to send you all of the possessions of Janis that we have. Now at the time of her death, people descended on her house and took momentos without our authorization. But, I do have some things here, and I'll send them to you." It was kind of like Christmas. We'd get a crate a day and it went on for weeks, and so those materials became the basis for the Joplin exhibit.

(to be continued)



Left seated - Bennette Germaine Fredeman, Mrs. Murey Ezell, Merle Murphy.
Standing - Sydalese

photo Merle Murphy Collection

MUSEUM'S RADIO STATION "ON THE AIR"

After an extended amount of hard work and dedication, the Museum of the Gulf Coast Radio Station has flipped its switch, and is on the air. By "on the air" we mean the service is streaming digitally, and is available to anyone with an internet connection, free of charge.

The station's playlist includes, as you might expect, music from our inductees in the Music Hall of Fame. Says Museum Director, Tom Neal, "Radio stations on the public airwaves are no longer interested in playing music from here like they used to be. That's where we come in."

With the help of radio veteran Bob Buckalew, MOGC Radio will insure that people continue to hear the music that once put the Golden Triangle on the pop music map. Hits from the fifties through the eighties are a big part of the playlist, with Swamp Pop, Cajun, Zydeco, Country, and Blues adding to the local feel of the songs listeners will experience. Station I.D.'s recorded by Mary Kay Place, C.J. Chenier, Wade Phillips, Jiven' Gene, Barbara Lynn, and others are sprinkled throughout.



There are many ways to find the channel. We have a link at the top of our website MuseumoftheGulfCoast.org. You can also find it by googling Museum of the Gulf Coast Radio (which will take you to our website). If you have a smart speaker such as an Alexa, you can ask it to "play Museum of the Gulf Coast Radio." It is also available on the iHeart website.



CHARLIE ROBERTSON RETURNS TO HIS FAMILIAR CHAIR

In November, the longest running employee at the Museum returned to his familiar place after an extended absence. Mr. Charlie (as we affectionately call him) is an integral part of what we do here on every level. To the thousands of visitors from around the world that walk through our doors, he is often the most visible contact. After twenty plus years, Charlie is very often the first person we ask if we have a question about the Museum's past. We are very excited that he is well and has returned.

MOGC Mourns the Passing of Frank Cricchio, Bob West, and Steve Worster

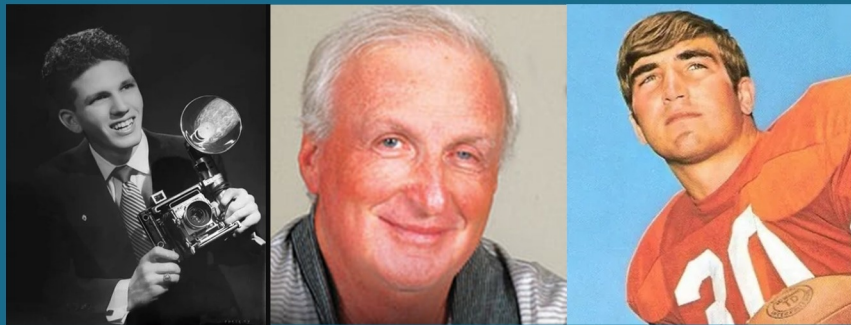
Lifelong Port Arthurian **Frank Cricchio** helped lead the technological advances that ushered in the golden age of photography as part of a group of photographers that advised Kodak and later Fuji film. He was also asked to participate by Adobe in the development of their first version of Photoshop. Cricchio conducted so many seminars across the U.S. that his vast knowledge became legendary. Locally, he was simply known as a great portrait photographer. His work was recently exhibited in the Museum's Dunn gallery.

Port Arthur News sportswriter, **Bob West**, is an important figure to MOGC. West loved and supported the Museum by helping put together the now legendary line-ups for the roasts that funded the Museum as it matured into the institution that it is today.

Roostees he cajoled into participating included sports figures who were at the top of their game and fame at the time: Bum Phillips, Jimmy Johnson (twice), Wade Phillips, Jamaal Charles and Billy Tubbs. That stellar line-up attracted the participation of a vast array of sports, political, and entertainment figures which included Ann Richards, Emmitt Smith, Vince Young, and the legendary Don Rickles. West was one of the most respected sports writers in the country, and when he called athletes and coaches, they answered the phone. He was instrumental in putting together the Bum Phillips award, which is now presented by Wade Phillips every year to the best high school coach in the area. The presentation occurs in our Sports Hall of Fame.

Bridge City native, **Steve Worster** is near the top of a list of SETX athletes who never went pro, but who are legendary Texas sports figures. As an All American running back in high school, he led Bridge City to the State Championship in 1966. As a two time collegiant All American and part of Darrell Royal's famed wishbone offense, Worster led the Longhorns to two national championships. Sports writers voted him 1970 Texas amateur athlete of the year. All three are inducted into the Museum's Halls of Fame.

From left to right: Frank Cricchio, Bob West, and Steve Worster



Memorials

LOUISE MARCEL BAKER

Connie Nicholas

JASON BOUDOIN

Tom and Linda Neal

JESSE BRANICK

Gary and Shelly Parsley

Tom and Linda Neal

MARY JANE DAVIS

Doc and Denise Perron

JOHN WAYNE DEGGS

Tom and Linda Neal

BRENDA DRAGO

Joe Drago

JOE DRAGO

Gary and Shelly Parsley

Tom and Linda Neal

Dean and Ann Priddy

PHILLIP and CONCETTA DRAGO

Joe Drago

BECKY DUNGAN

Tom and Linda Neal

Robert and Linda Fong

BILL FREDEMAN

Bayne and Beverly Staggs

STACY HALTOM

Salvador and Pat Sierra

DOROTHY LAFITTE

Tom and Linda Neal

KATHRYN SUE LANDRENEAU

Doc and Denise Perron

JUDY LOFTON

Ann Boutte

Dr. Sam and Linda Monroe

Tom and Linda Neal

Stuart and Patti Salter

PAMELA MENNIE

Tom and Linda Neal

WILLIAM "BILL" JENNINGS MOYE

Lucille Armintor

DEE DEE PILLITERE

Jon and Terry Hampton

CHRISTINA PELLOAT

Doc and Denise Perron

JO CAROL SAVARINO REDD

Dr. Sam and Linda Monroe

Tom and Linda Neal

HAL ROSS

Gene and Anna Christian

Jon and Terry Hampton

DAVID SLAUGHTER

Tom and Linda Neal

GEORGE SLAUGHTER

Tom and Linda Neal

HAROLD AND SYLVIA SYLVIA

Port Arthur Community Federal Credit Union

JAMES LLOYD THOMAS, JR.

Doc and Denise Perron

JOHN VILLOT

Hoyt Neal Jr

Tom and Linda Neal

Dr. Sam and Linda Monroe

JOHN AND CLINT WASSER

Dana Wasser

BOB WEST

Wade and Laurie Phillips

Dr. Sam and Linda Monroe

Tom and Linda Neal

John Crain and Shannon Ryan

Brian Cusack

Bart Bragg

Floyd and Francine Gaspard

Jon Wadsworth

Terry and Gwen Rozelle

Connie Nicholas

Jessica Champa

Mary Dorsey

Regina Rogers

Carol Wommack

Ann Boutte

Jim Nantz

David Bickford

KATIE WINSTEAD

Stuart and Patti Salter

Donations

Dr. Sam and Linda Monroe
Marvin and Cheryl Dearman
Hoyt Neal
Jerry and Sheila Connally
Jeff Hayes
David and Cynthia Neal
Jesse and Pat DeLee
Cal and Verna Rutherford
Tom and Linda Neal
Gary and Shelly Parsley
TJ CLASS OF 1963
TJ Class of 1981
TJ Class of 1982
TJ Class of 1983
Port Arthur Sertoma
Motiva Enterprises, LLC

Doug and Debra Poindexter
Olga Ann Reyes
Johnny Charles Milich
Dr. Frank and Tammy Kotzur
Charlie and Indria Jones, Jr.
David Varnado
Dr. Jesse and Pat DeLee
Michael Fuljenz
David and Cynthia Neal
Port Arthur Commodores
Betty Dismukes
Port Arthur Evening Sertoma
Michael Neel
Phyllis Lehmborg
In Honor of Marjory Irwin

**Port Arthur
125th
Anniversary
Commemorative
Throw
\$59.99**



Thank you

Thank you to our steadfast supporters of the Museum of the Gulf Coast, and the Port Arthur Historical Society. Your generous contributions are a vital part of our effort to preserve the storied history of this region. Those members and non-members who wish to contribute a memorial in the name of a loved one, or make a donation, please call (409) 999-6282, email us at MuseumoftheGulfCoast@gmail.com, or go to MuseumoftheGulfCoast.org



**Administered by the Port Arthur
Historical Society in Partnership
with the City of Port Arthur.**

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Port Arthur, TX 77640
Permit No. 394

Return Service
Requested

MuseumoftheGulfCoast@gmail.com
(409) 982-7000

**Become a member by mailing in the form below or
navigating to our online giftshop at MuseumoftheGulfCoast.org**

MUSEUM OF THE GULF COAST
700 PROCTOR, PORT ARTHUR, TX 77640

HOURS OF OPERATION
Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.



PORT ARTHUR CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
1-800-235-7822 • www.portarthurtexas.com

Please return this form with dues to:
Museum of the Gulf Coast
700 Proctor Street, Port Arthur 77640

Please check your desired membership level:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Student - \$10 | ☐ Corporate - \$150 - \$250 |
| ☐ Single - \$25 | ☐ Patron - \$100 |
| ☐ Couple - \$40 | ☐ Benefactor - \$500 |
| ☐ Family - \$50 | ☐ Life - \$1,000 |
| ☐ Sustaining - \$75 | ☐ Presidential - \$5,000 |
| ☐ Non-Profit Org. - \$50 | ☐ Stillwell - \$10,000 |

☐ Check (payable to Port Arthur Historical Society)

☐ Credit card:

☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ Other ☐ Yearly Recurring

Number _____

Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____

Name (Please print) _____

Company (Does your company match contributions? Circle Y or N) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____