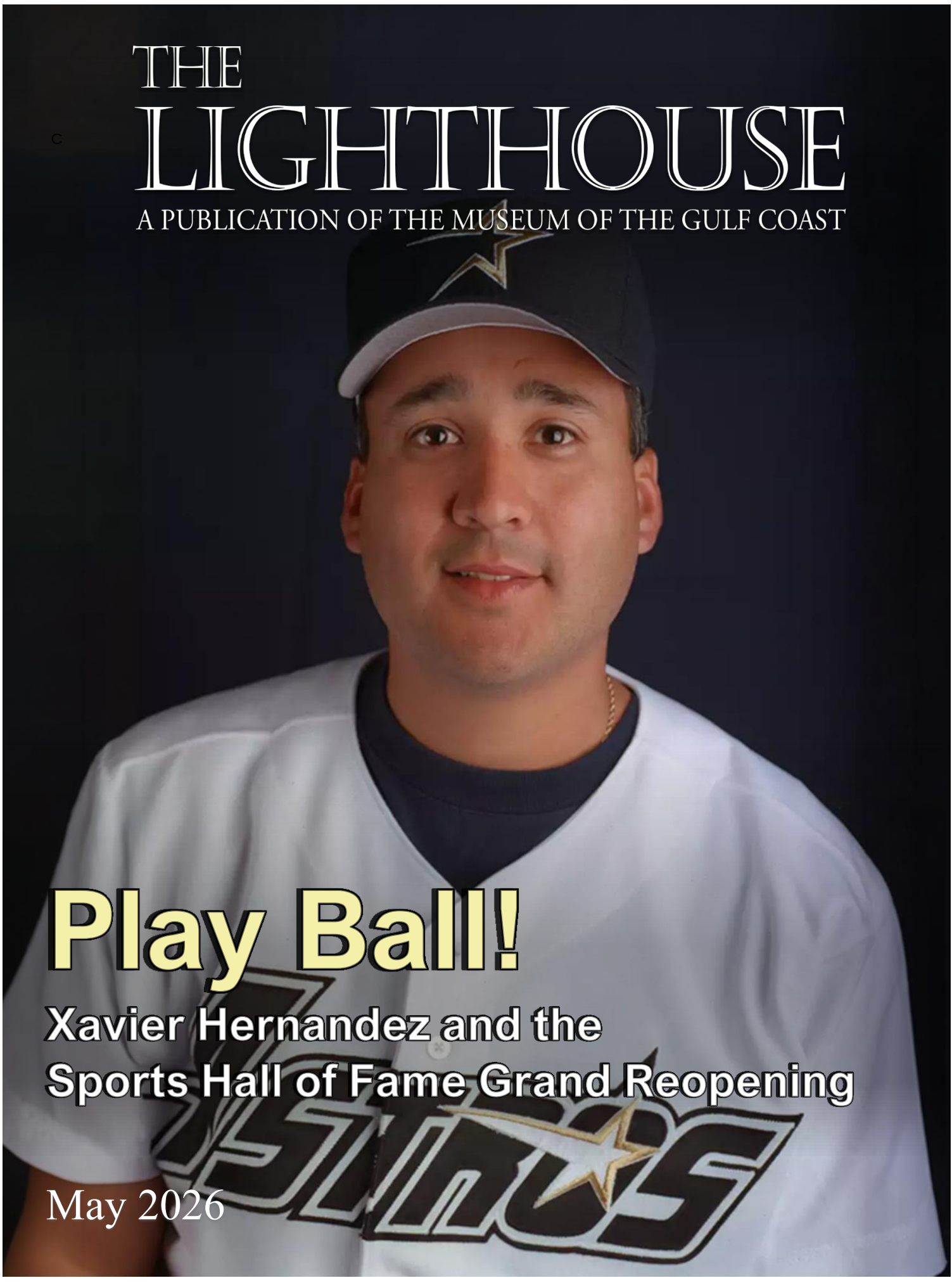


THE LIGHTHOUSE

A PUBLICATION OF THE MUSEUM OF THE GULF COAST



Play Ball!

Xavier Hernandez and the
Sports Hall of Fame Grand Reopening

May 2026

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CONTENTS



- 3 – from The Director
- 4 – Sports Hall of Fame, Reopen!
- 5 – From the Vault
- 6 – Newest Blues Hall of Famers
- 7 – Hometown Heroes
- 8 – Pompeiian Villa / Gala
- 9 – The Legacy Hall of Fame
- 10 – Memorials / Shark Week
- 11 – Donations / New Exhibit

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from The Director

Hello, and welcome to another installment highlighting the great things happening at the Museum of the Gulf Coast!

Since our last newsletter, we have hosted many exciting events, and we are especially thrilled about the ribbon-cutting celebration for our newly expanded and remodeled Sports Hall of Fame. The renovation now allows us to properly showcase all of our inductees and their memorabilia. Visitors can also enjoy our new 55-inch touchscreen display, which highlights the remarkable achievements and talents that earned these individuals their place in the Hall of Fame.

A special thank you goes to Coach Wade Phillips, along with NFL greats Johnny Fuller and Mike Simpson, Canadian Football League Hall of Famer Don Narcisse, and National Hot Rod drag racer Coleman Roddy, for helping us celebrate this exciting occasion by presenting and cutting the ribbon for the grand opening of the new exhibit. It was a wonderful event, and we look forward to honoring future inductees and continuing to celebrate the outstanding athletes and sports legends connected to the Gulf Coast region.



I am happy to report that our 23rd Annual Museum of the Gulf Coast Gala, featuring many special drink offerings, a silent auction, and the talents of our Museum Hall of Fame member Tim Foust, along with his friend's performance, made it a huge and memorable evening. Thank you to all of you who contributed and attended. Please mark your calendar for next year's Gala on April 24, 2027.

Another new exhibit has been added to our Local History section on the first floor. Presented on a 55-inch touchscreen, the long-awaited Legacy Hall of Fame highlights noteworthy people from across the Gulf Coast region. It also features a historical narrative and a pictorial timeline showing how the area has evolved from its beginnings in the late 1800s to today. A third section, titled Betting, Booze, and Brothels, explores our area from the 1960's and earlier, when the James Commission was established to address widespread gambling, liquor, and vice activity present throughout the region. This exhibit shares many fascinating stories from a colorful and complex period in local history.

Please invite friends, family, and others in the community to support the Museum of the Gulf Coast by becoming members. Donors who contribute \$1,000 or more may have their name, business, or organization recognized on our back-lit donor board at the front of the museum. Gifts may also be made in honor or memory of someone special.

Note: We will have many new inductions in the coming weeks. Hope to see you soon.

Tom Neal

The Sports Hall of Fame: Bigger & Better than Ever

On March 7, 2026, the Museum of the Gulf Coast officially reopened its Sports Hall of Fame following a major renovation and expansion of the exhibit. While the Hall has long served as a central feature of the museum, its layout and display had not been significantly updated in recent years. Continued additions of new inductees created

the need for increased space and a more modern presentation. The Museum now recognizes over 100 Sports Hall of Fame inductees, with additional honorees expected later this year.



The renovation introduced expanded display areas and updated exhibit design, allowing for a more complete presentation of artifacts, uniforms, equipment, trophies, and awards associated with each inductee. The reopening event featured the attendance of five Hall of Famers: Wade Phillips, Mike Simpson, Don Narcisse, Johnny Fuller, and Coleman Roddy. Each participated in the ribbon cutting and met with visitors during the event.

The expansion provides dedicated exhibit space for inductees whose materials were previously limited in display. These include Kendrick Perkins, James Gamble, Mark Petkovsek, Mark Henry, Andrew Landry, Charean Williams, Bobby Leopold, Jimmy & Clarence Picou, and more.



From the Vault

Bun B's Music Video Outfit

This white jacket and purple shirt were worn by Bun B during the filming of the music video for International Players Anthem (I Choose You), released in 2007. Filmed in Port Arthur, the video showcases local landmarks including the Gulfgate Bridge and sections of downtown, highlighting the city's cultural landscape. The song, performed by UGK featuring Outkast, reached No. 70 on the Billboard Hot 100 while earning UGK's first Grammy nomination and won major honors, including BET's Video of the Year. This outfit represents both a defining moment in hip-hop and a strong connection to Southeast Texas.



Handlan Railroad Lantern

This early 20th-century railroad lantern, manufactured by Handlan around 1905, was an essential tool for rail workers operating in Southeast Texas. Equipped with a durable metal frame and a colored glass globe, lanterns like this were used to communicate signals to train crews, indicating when trains could proceed, slow, or stop. The teal globe on this example bears the inscription "Port Arthur Route," directly tying it to regional rail lines that served the area. Such lanterns played a critical role in maintaining safety and coordination along busy rail corridors during a formative period of transportation history.



Victor-Victrola Record Player

This Victor-Victrola floor cabinet phonograph, dating to approximately 1917, reflects the growing popularity of recorded music in American homes during the early twentieth century. Manufactured by the Victor Talking Machine Company, these enclosed cabinet models combined furniture craftsmanship with early sound reproduction technology.

Unlike modern record players, the Victrola required no electricity or external cords. The internal spring-driven motor was powered manually using the winding crank mounted on the side of the cabinet. Sound was amplified through internal acoustic speakers concealed within the wooden cabinet, eliminating the need for the large external horns seen on earlier phonographs. Built-in storage compartments on the front provided space for records and albums, making the Victrola both practical and decorative within the home. Donated in memory of Mary Kay Fuller of Beaumont.



Barbara Lynn & Marcia Ball

Inducted into Blues Hall of Fame

Marcia Ball and Barbara Lynn were both inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame in recognition of their lasting contributions to the genre and their deep ties to the Gulf Coast music tradition.



Barbara Lynn, born in Beaumont, Texas, is a guitarist, singer, and songwriter best known for her 1962 hit “You’ll Lose a Good Thing.” Notably, Lynn is one of the few left-handed lead guitarists in blues and R&B, playing her instrument in a reversed configuration. Her playing style, combined with her songwriting, helped distinguish her in a male-dominated industry during the early 1960s. She recorded for labels such as Jamie Records and maintained a steady recording and performing career over the years. Her music blends blues, soul, and rhythm and blues, and she has been cited as an influence by numerous artists.



Marcia Ball, born in Orange, Texas, is a pianist, songwriter, and vocalist whose style blends blues, boogie-woogie, Texas blues, and Louisiana influences. Over a career spanning several decades, she has become known for her rhythmic piano playing and distinctive voice. Ball has released numerous albums and has been a consistent presence on the national and international blues circuit. Her work reflects the regional sound of Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana, incorporating elements of zydeco and New Orleans R&B. In addition to her Blues Hall of Fame induction, she has received multiple Blues Music Awards and a Grammy nomination.

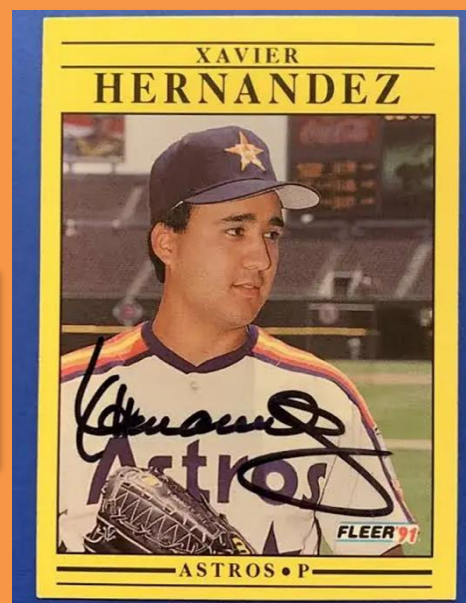
Their inductions into the Blues Hall of Fame formally recognize their roles in shaping and sustaining blues music. Both artists represent the musical heritage of Southeast Texas and have contributed to preserving and advancing the genre through performance, recording, and continued engagement with audiences. They join the likes of other MOGC Music Hall of Famers such as Clifford Antone, Charles Brown, Blind Willie Johnson, Lonnie Brooks, Clifton Chenier, Cosimo Matassa, Slim Harpo, and Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown.

Hometown Heroes: Xavier Hernandez

A proud native of Port Arthur, Xavier Hernandez carved out a decade-long career in Major League Baseball, earning respect as a reliable and durable pitcher across multiple organizations. A graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School, Hernandez first made his mark locally by leading the Yellow Jackets to a Class 5A state championship in 1983 and earning All-State honors—early signs of the success that would follow.

Hernandez went on to play 10 seasons in the majors, appearing in 463 games and pitching 671 innings, while recording 562 strikeouts and a 3.90 career ERA. His most dominant season came in 1992 with the Houston Astros, when he posted an outstanding 2.11 ERA and compiled a 9–1 record over 72 appearances.

Over the course of his career, Hernandez suited up for five MLB teams, including the Astros in two separate stints, New York Yankees, Cincinnati Reds, Toronto Blue Jays, and Texas Rangers. Known for his consistency and ability to handle high-



pressure situations, he became a dependable bullpen presence throughout the 1990s.

Beyond the numbers, Hernandez's legacy is deeply tied to his roots. Growing up attending games in the Houston Astrodome, he later experienced the surreal moment of stepping onto that same field as a professional, fulfilling a childhood dream. After retiring, he continued to give back to the game through coaching and player development, mentoring the next generation of players. He previously served as Assistant Coach at Houston Baptist University (now Houston Christian University) and now continues his work in baseball as a coach at St. John XXIII College Preparatory in Katy. His journey from Port Arthur ballfields to the major leagues remains an inspiring example of Southeast Texas talent reaching the highest level of the sport.



Pompeiiian Villa Update

I know many of you have been asking when the Pompeiiian Villa will reopen for tours. Interest has remained strong, with individuals and groups already reaching out for photography sessions and guided visits, and we are excited to share that progress continues steadily. This project has involved extensive long-term repairs, including a full HVAC overhaul, major electrical upgrades, replacement lighting, and significant foundation work to address and prevent structural issues. Crews have also been performing cosmetic work and applying some fresh paint.



This work has been carried out in conjunction with the City of Port Arthur, with the Museum staff serving as stewards of this historic home. As of this publication, we have begun carefully reinstalling furniture, artifacts, and other delicate pieces that define the Villa's character. If all continues as planned, we are hopeful for a ribbon cutting in June.

2026 Gala Headliner: Tim Foust

The 2026 MOGC Gala entertainment was none other than our own Tim Foust, a Southeast Texas native with deep roots in the region. Born in Nederland, Foust has gained national recognition as a member of the acclaimed a cappella group Home Free, known for their rich harmonies and distinctive sound. About a decade ago, Home Free rose to prominence after winning NBC's *The Sing-Off*, bringing widespread attention to their vocal talent and earning a dedicated following.

Tim's return to perform in the area highlighted both his continued success and his strong connection to the community where his musical journey began. The Museum of the Gulf Coast is grateful to Tim and his friends from Nashville for taking the time to come to Port Arthur and help make the evening so memorable. Their presence added something truly special to the gala and served as a reminder of the importance of celebrating local talent and the lasting impact of Southeast Texas on the national stage.



Introducing the Legacy Hall of Fame

At the start of this year, the Museum's Board of Directors approved a new group of Hall of Fame inductees, many of whom will soon be publicly announced as members of the Legacy Hall of Fame. This distinction recognizes individuals whose impact is deeply rooted in Port Arthur and Southeast Texas—figures who may not have reached international prominence, but whose contributions have shaped the identity and culture of our community in lasting ways.

A key part of this group includes foundational figures tied to the city's origins and early development, such as founder Arthur Stilwell and early financier John Gates. Their influence helped establish Port Arthur as a center of growth and opportunity along the Gulf Coast.

The Legacy Hall of Fame also highlights more recent individuals whose work has left a meaningful local mark. Among them are harmonica player Paul Orta, photographer Bart Bragg, and artist Harry Ahysen, each recognized for their creative contributions and cultural influence within the region.

Together, these inductees reflect the depth of local history and the many voices that continue to define Port Arthur's story.



Memorials

Fran Albers

Doc and Denise Perron

Sonya Kay Barnett

Tom and Linda Neal

Vicki Beard

Gail Shook

Bill Fouts

Stuart and Patti Salter

Margaret Gamble

Bart Bragg

Kristin Rose Hardin

Becky Guidry

Tracy and Rhonda Matthews

Doc and Denise Perron

Emily Baker

Sybil and Lorin Chamberlin

Patricia Holmes

Cody Holmes

Vanessa Broussard

Cathy Pellerin Hollier

Doc and Denise Perron

Linda Monroe

Tommy and Rose PreJean

Dr. Charles Gongre

James and Judy Black

Tom and Becky Henry

Stephen Romeo

Patricia Holmes

Vanessa Broussard

Sandra Harris

Billie Savoie

Doc and Denise Perron

Will Scott

Dr. Sam Monroe

Darrel Surgi

Doc and Denise Perron

Gail Shook

Rose Lynn Tibbs

Dr. Sam Monroe

Mark Your Calendars!

Great White Sharks



in the Gulf

Saturday June 20
10 AM - 1 PM

*FREE Family Day event
at the Museum*

- Screening of the documentary *Gulf Great White Sharks*
- Q & A with filmmaker Chester Moore
- Book Signing with Chester Moore
- Conservation Education Activities
- Photo Booth
- And More...



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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 to make a donation, please call (409) 999-6282, email us at MuseumoftheGulfCoast@gmail.com, or visit us at MuseumoftheGulfCoast.org.



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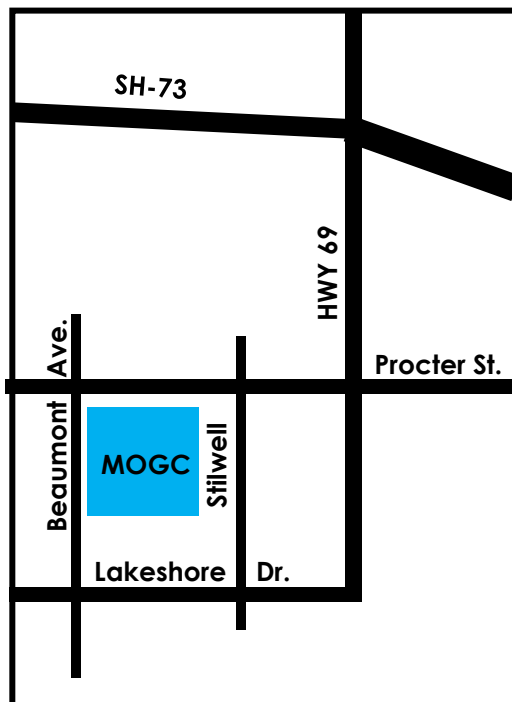
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