



cook museum
of NATURAL SCIENCE

Annual Report 2019

Letter from our PRESIDENT



Welcome to your new Museum! Our grand opening on June 7, 2019, was a surreal experience for me. The doors finally opened on a vision and mission, occupying much of the past eight years, to create a first-class museum and visitor experience that engages, excites, and educates visitors of all ages about the natural, created world around us.

Special thanks goes to Schelly Corry, and her husband Brian, who invested over five years in the development of the organization and exhibits. In the fall of 2019, we welcomed Scott Mayo as Executive Director, who has jumped in with both feet.

To experience what has happened here in downtown Decatur, Alabama, is truly remarkable - families and school groups curiously and eagerly exploring the Exhibits, the Museum Store wonderfully displayed and decorated, especially during the holidays, Nature's Table welcoming weekly familiar faces, active Memberships reached 2,840, and our special-event rental spaces transformed for a black-tie, masquerade Butterfly Ball, among other special occasions.

It has been an honor to open these doors with our exceptional Cook Museum team members who have displayed a high level of care and service excellence, and our extended Museum family of generous and enthusiastic founding supporters.

Thank you for believing in and joining us in accomplishing something truly meaningful and celebrating the fact that *Life is Amazing!*

Brian Cook
President

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- Chief Nate Allen
- Jim Aycock
- Doug Bachuss
- Greg Barnes
- Dr. Marc Bendickson
- Angela Casciano
- Renee Simmons Raney
- Tami Reist
- Destin Sandlin
- Tara Sandlin
- Wally Terry
- Skip Thompson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



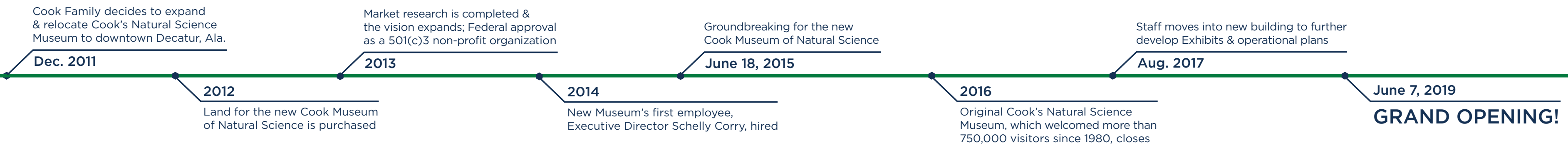
Left to Right: John Cook Jr., Lyn Cook, Leslie Cook, Eleanor (Jo) Cook, & Brian Cook

ESSENTIALS

Our mission is to **ENGAGE, EXCITE, & EDUCATE** visitors of **ALL AGES** about the **NATURAL CREATED WORLD** around us.

These values are crucial to our success:
INTEGRITY
EXCELLENCE
STEWARDSHIP
SERVICE
RESPECT
GRATITUDE

FROM DECISION TO OPENING





WE ARE A TEAM

LEADERSHIP



Brian Cook
President &
Board Chairman



Scott Mayo
Executive
Director



Eric Miller
Senior Director
of Operations



Mark Wallace
Senior Director
of Administration



Jeanne Payne
Director of
Development



John Kelton
Director of Exhibits
& Visitor Experience

We are in an incredibly rewarding time in the life of the Museum. All the planning and preparation is now being put into action. It is deeply satisfying to see the faces and hear the conversations of our guests – we are truly engaging, exciting, and educating visitors of all ages. Even in the midst of providing an amazing experience, we are always striving to improve our offerings.

Our busiest days have given us opportunity to hone our ticketing and Gallery Explainer methods, ensuring that all guests enjoy the most we have to offer. The wide age range of the students involved in our field trips has allowed us to stretch our classes to fit diverse needs. Even in our first year of being open to the public, we know we must work to engage, excite, and educate.

Looking ahead, we see much opportunity for growth. We have been so blessed by our donors, our volunteers, and our wonderful staff. The stewardship of that blessing is not something we take lightly.

New programs, new classes, new animals – all are crucial pieces for us to remain a place where next generations are inspired. Our mission and vision call and compel us to that task. To all those who have played a part in bringing us to this point, we sincerely thank you. As we continue to extend our reach and impact, we trust you will continue with us in this journey.

Scott Mayo
Executive Director

Letter from our EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



WE ARE ENGAGING

Visitors are experiencing nature and science close-up through interactive exhibits and educational programs.

Our programming staff and regular volunteers are essential to **keeping Members involved** in the Museum.

We laid the foundation for our **recurring Member and visitor activities** during the fall of 2019, so there's always something new to do and discover.

Most activities are **free for Members**. Our programs aim to engage the visitor and enrich their experience through crafts, games, educational discussions, and hands-on activities.

- Q&A Sessions
- Live Animal Feedings
- Member-Only Activities
- Themed Fun Days
- Seasonal Day Camps



3,700+
HOURS WORKED
BY 122 MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

2,800+
CHARTER MEMBERSHIPS SOLD

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Unlimited FREE General Admission for a year
- 25% discount for additional General Admission tickets
- \$50 OFF birthday party packages
 - 10% discount at Nature's Table
- 10% discount at the Museum Store
 - Invitations to exclusive Member-Only opportunities

WE ARE EXCITING

June 7, 2019, was a truly special day for all who were in attendance at the Museum's grand opening. It was a joy opening our doors to the public, surrounded by enthusiastic friends, donors, and dignitaries. **The fun has begun!**

Our team can now showcase Alabama's biodiversity and beauty to enthusiastic visitors.



Congressman Mo Brooks



 **4** 
THREATENED OR ENDANGERED species living in our care



Eastern Indigo Snake

WE ARE EDUCATING

The Museum began offering field trips and educational classes in the fall of 2019.

In those few short months, **4,532 students** were able to experience science and learning at the Museum for the first time.

School groups have been able to enjoy an up-close view of life in the **Oceans tanks**, climb to the top of **"Big Tree"**, explore an **authentically created cave**, and more while learning about nature and wildlife in a way that will spark their love of learning for years to come.

Guided group tours and instructional classroom time are available for groups of all ages on an array of topics.



S.T.E.A.M. CURRICULUM

LIVE ANIMALS

HANDS-ON LEARNING

THREE SCIENCE CLASSROOMS



Themed Birthday Parties



Eastern Box Turtle



12 SCIENCE CLASSES
BASED ON
S.T.E.A.M. CURRICULUM

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Our Education Department offers classes on a **variety of topics** taught with our lab-grade technology:

- Bovine Eye Dissection
- Electromagnetism
- Extraordinary Life Cycles
- Weather Watchers
- And many more!

Donor support has helped grow our **Education Sponsorship Fund** which assists students with their visit to the Museum and educational class experiences.

As of 2019, we have raised **over \$7,500** for this fund, which provided an amazing equal educational opportunity for 750 to 1,500 local students!



nature's table



Nature's Table has been well received by Museum guests and fills a niche in the local community.

Online ordering capabilities and **outside catering** services were launched in the fall.

Located inside the Cook Museum, the cafe is **open to the general public** without an admission ticket.

From feeding families a quick healthy meal to boxed lunches for visiting school groups, Nature's Table has been off to a busy start!

@NaturesTableatCookMuseum
cookmuseum.naturestable.com



E V E N T S

From the Alabama Mountain Lakes Annual Conference to a charity black tie Butterfly Ball, our event spaces **hosted over 2,300 guests.**

Community groups, large and small, formal and informal, found a local place to gather for meetings, dinners, award ceremonies, and more.



Migratory Hall can seat over 200.



Main Street Alabama



Monarch Hall can seat over 300.



museum store

At the Museum Store, shoppers can drop-in to find the **perfect gift** for that hard-to-shop-for person!

We carry a wide range of items with price points for **every budget.**

Whether you're looking for a locally inspired souvenir, a special piece of jewelry, nature inspired home décor, fun science experiments, books, toys, or more you'll find **something for everyone.**





CAVES



OCEANS

77,000+
MUSEUM VISITORS
 JUNE-DECEMBER
 OF 2019



Rivers & STREAMS

LIFE IS **AMAZING**



LOOKING UP



FOUNDATIONS



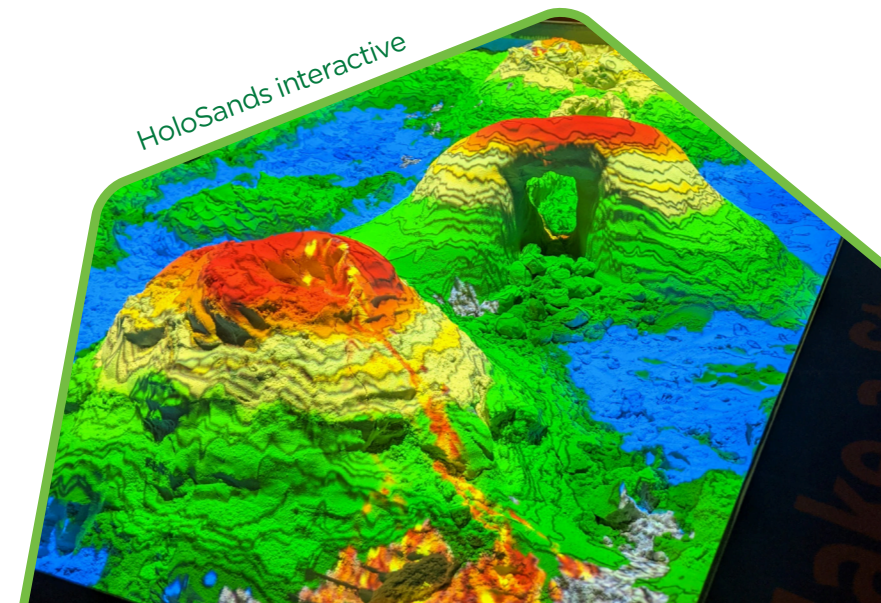
ARCTIC DESERT

19,590
 LIKES
 ON



RECOGNITIONS

- USA Today 10Best New Museums Reader's Choice 2nd place nationally
- "Most Exciting Museums Opening in 2019" Smithsonian Magazine print edition & online
- Gold Award Winner for Technology in Gallery Installations from the Southeastern Museums Conference for our HoloSands interactive (the sandtable)
- Chosen for the 2018 Award of Excellence by Main Street Alabama, a statewide organization focused on economic development



“ My family from Indiana came for fall break. Our ages ranged from 2 to 71 and every one of us enjoyed it immensely. ”

- Tripadvisor reviewer Dennis F.

WE ARE GRATEFUL

Because of the incredible generosity and support of our donors and friends, the Cook Museum was able to open in a grand way.

We are so honored to continue on this journey with you.

Larry & Kim Lewis family



Decatur Coca-Cola Bottling Company



The Caring Foundation
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama



Fite Building Company



GE Appliances, a Haier Company



Pam & Joe Alexander



What a joy to see so many donors visiting the Cook Museum with family and friends! Your enthusiastic support of the Museum has been incredible!

Because of your generous donations, dreams became reality with the opening of the Museum. I remember our tears of joy the first time we saw children enjoying the Museum. In 2019, the Capital Campaign contributions soared to **\$21,779,107** and donations are still coming in. We are very appreciative to the outstanding leadership of our campaign co-chairs **Dr. Dorothy Davidson and Dr. Marc Bendickson.**

There are many ways that you can continue to support the Museum. We are working to build our **Education Sponsorship Fund** for students.

We still have a limited number of naming opportunities in the building, as well as opportunities for names to be placed on Founder's Wall.

If you would like more information or would like to help make an introduction to a potential donor, please contact me at **jpayne@cookmuseum.org**. Continue to spread the good word about the Museum!

Jeanne Payne, Ph.D
Director of Development

Letter from our DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



OUR DONORS

FOUNDING VISIONARIES \$1,000,000 +

- Anonymous
- The Cook Family
- City of Decatur, AL
- Davidson Technologies, Inc.
- Corteva Agriscience

FOUNDING PARTNERS \$300,000 - \$999,999

- Anonymous
- Alpha Foundation
- The Caring Foundation of Blue Cross Blue Shield Alabama
- Shirley & George McCrary
- Nucor Steel of Decatur, LLC

FOUNDING LEADERS \$100,000 - \$299,999

- 3M Materials Resource Division
- Alabama Farmers Cooperative, Inc.
- Baker Foundation
- Dr. Marc & Sheryl Bendickson Family
- Mitch & Monya Claborn
- Daikin America, Inc.
- Decatur Coca-Cola Bottling Company
- Gary & Theresa Donald Family
- The Dunbar Family Foundation
- Family Security Credit Union
- GE Appliances, a Haier Company
- Hexcel Corporation
- Honda of Decatur
- Huntsville International Airport
- In God We Trust Fund
- Independence Tube Corporation
- AlphaPet / Indorama Ventures
- Dr. Ben & Diana Light
- Lynn Layton Chevrolet
- Magnolia River
- Oakworth Capital Bank
- Mr. & Mrs. Charles G. Pitman Family

FOUNDING LEADERS CONTINUED

- Redstone Federal Credit Union
- Regions Bank
- Steelcase Foundation
- Valent Group, an EBSCO company
- Wayne Farms, LLC

FOUNDING FRIENDS \$10,000 - \$99,999

- Air Products
- Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association
- Joe & Pam Alexander
- Sam & Jo Alfano
- Anonymous
- Diane & Steve Armistead
- AT&T of Alabama
- Jim & Jeanette Aycock in honor of Mr. & Mrs. John R. Cook, Sr.
- Bank Independent
- Mr. & Mrs. Paul Barber
- Greg & Randy Barnes
- The Barran Family
- Bayer Corporation
- Bell Laboratories, Inc.
- Jim & Tami Bolte
- Blythe & Henry Bowman
- Tom & Jim Bradford Families
- Brandenburg, Inc.
- Bragg Family Charitable Foundation
- Building Construction Associates, Inc.
- The Trevor Butcher Family
- Dr. Ray & Sandra Cain
- Dr. Mary Jane Caylor
- Cerrowire
- The Chandler Family
- Carla & Gary Cobb
- Computer Support Systems, Inc.
- Contractor Service & Fabrication, Inc.
- Dr. Kin & Ann Copeland
- Crestwood Medical Center
- Cricket By The Creek
- Mr. & Mrs. Wesley Crunkleton
- John & Debbie Davidson
- The Decatur Daily

FOUNDING FRIENDS CONTINUED

- Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority
- Decatur Morgan Hospital
- Herman & Lynne Marks, Jr.
- The Harvey & Carol Massey Foundation
- Dr. & Mrs. Jeffrey McCollum
- The McComm Group
- Katie Harris Mitchell
- Modern Technology Solutions, Inc.
- Morgan County, Ala. Commission
- Dr. Gerald & Lynda New
- H.M. Nowlin
- OBGYN Associates, P.A.
- Mr. & Mrs. Jim Odom
- Office Interiors by OSCO, Inc.
- Senator & Mrs. Arthur Orr
- Mr. & Mrs. Stratton Orr
- Dr. & Mrs. Charles Overstreet
- Dr. Richard & Cyndy Palmer
- Dr. Jeanne Duke Payne
- Mr. & Mrs. John G. Pearce
- Peck Funeral Home, Inc.
- Peoples Bank of Alabama
- Krista Chandler Pitman & Family
- Polyplex USA, LLC
- John & Ginny Pylant
- Red Sage Communications, Inc.
- Renasant Bank
- Derica & Robin Rice
- Dr. & Mrs. Lew Sample
- Clyde & Mary Jane Sasser
- Dr. Frank & Melanie Scalfano
- Mr. & Mrs. Ken Schuppert, Jr.
- Paul & Mary Ann Scott
- SCSWORX
- Sexton Foundation
- Bill & Noel Shinn
- Joe & Glee Sides
- Dr. & Mrs. Bill Sims
- Dr. & Mrs. Jonathan South
- Southeastern Freight Lines, Inc.
- Loretta Purdy Spencer
- Chris & Renée Story
- Stovall Marks Insurance
- Surgical Associates of North Alabama
- The Lioce Group

FOUNDING FRIENDS CONTINUED

- Dr. Larry & Melanie Little
- Mr. & Mrs. Peter Lowe
- The Ma-Ran Foundation
- Syngenta Turf & Landscape
- Drs. Chris & Stephanie Teichmiller
- Temple, Inc.
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Paul & May Thomas
- The Thompson Foundation
- Mr. & Mrs. Skip Thompson
- Torch Technologies, Inc.
- Univar USA, Inc.
- Valley Rubber, LLC
- Mike & Weety Vickery
- Robin & Linda Wade
- Dr. C. Thomas White
- White Oak Transportation
- Steve & Ginger Willard
- Lonnie & Susan Williams
- Rick Williams in honor of Emma Katherine
- Willo Products Company
- Mr. & Mrs. Jim Worthey
- Wyker Family Foundation
- The John & June Wyker Charitable Foundation

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- Rick Williams in honor of Emma Katherine
- Willo Products Company
- Mr. & Mrs. Jim Worthey
- Wyker Family Foundation
- The John & June Wyker Charitable Foundation

OTHER CAMPAIGN SUPPORT \$25 - \$9,999

- Alabama Cleaning Service
- Dr. Bob & Ann Allen
- Armstrong Relocation Company
- Huntsville, LLC
- Dr. Deborah Barnhart
- Dr. Russell & Sandra Barr
- Don & Mary Allen Barthel
- BB&T Bank
- The Boeing Company
- Mayor Tab & Sherry Bowling
- Honorable & Mrs. David Breland
- Crystal Baldwin Brown
- Tommy & Jeanne Brown
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert P. Buchanan
- Deloain Burgess
- Byrd, Smalley & Adams, P.C.
- Cabela's
- Mr. Joe W. Campbell

OTHER CAMPAIGN SUPPORT CONTINUED

- Dr. Robert & Opal Campbell
- Central Life Sciences
- Dr. & Mrs. Stephen Chandler
- Chorba Contracting
- Clark Stoneworks, LLC
- Greg & Whitney Clemons
- Tom & Terri Collins
- COLSA Corporation
- Columbia International University - in honor of Dr. Lyn Cook
- Mr. & Mrs. John Coon
- Dr. Geoffrey & Carolyn Crawley
- Mr. & Mrs. Marion H. Davis, Sr.
- Decatur Culture Club
- Decatur Family Dentistry
- Decatur Morgan Co. Minority Development Association
- Decatur Rotary Club Foundation
- Rebecca Dodd
- Down the Line, Inc.
- Tommie & Linda Dunlap
- & Dr. Page Dunlap
- Kappie & Evans Dunn
- Stephen W. & Jean E. Elliott
- Mr. & Mrs. Tolbert Epps, III
- Susan & Ned Estes
- First Baptist Decatur
- Kenneth & M.M. Gamble
- Garver, LLC
- Margaret Anne Goldsmith
- Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Gray
- Richard & Charlotte Gregory
- Robert & Lou Greene
- Trudy Grisham
- GSE, Inc.
- Ms. Jaqueline Guice
- Kim & Jeff Hallmark
- Mrs. Mary Battle Hamilton
- Hart Charitable Foundation
- Debbie & Mark Heard
- Tracey & Amanda Hendrix
- Ms. Mary Nichols Hicks
- Joseph & Gabrielle Hill
- Mr. & Mrs. David Hobbs

OTHER CAMPAIGN SUPPORT CONTINUED

- Mr. Thomas House
- Jimmy Smith Jewelers & Family
- Dr. & Mrs. William H. Jones
- Mrs. Glenna Dee Jones
- Mr. & Mrs. John Joseph, IV
- Andy & Barbara Kelly
- King Insurance Agency
- Mr. Jim King
- Mr. Noel King
- Jerry & Jane Knight
- M&D Mechanical Contractors, Inc.
- H. Blake & Patty McAnally
- Courtney & Joey McCool
- Mr. & Mrs. Josh McDowell
- Dr. Jolly & Becky McKenzie
- Morgan County Education Retirees Association
- Morgan County Legislative Office
- Morgan County Master Gardeners Association
- National Space Club- Huntsville
- Nature's Table
- Dr. & Mrs. Edwin Cross Nichols, Jr.
- Roy & Susan Nichols
- nLogic, Inc.
- Brian & Calley Ondocsin
- John & Alice Ozier
- PeopleTec, Inc.
- Pepsi Cola Bottling Decatur, LLC
- The Perry Company, Inc.
- PNC Financial Services Group
- Progress Bank
- Patricia Pruitt
- Reynolds Funeral Home, Inc.
- Cynthia Richardson in honor of Debbie Moore
- Mr. Thomas Ritchie
- Rollins, Inc.
- Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Roth
- Ms. Catherine Saenger
- Saputo Dairy Foods USA
- ServisFirst Bank
- Ron & Cindy Shaver
- Shumake Furniture Company, Inc.
- Pat & Sally Smartt

OTHER CAMPAIGN SUPPORT CONTINUED

- Mark & Deborah Smith
- Southern Custom Exhibits
- Technical Directions, Inc.
- Toyota
- Dr. Dale Trammell
- The Jim Tucker Family
- Tucker, Scott & Wates, LLC
- Turner Construction
- TVW Electrical Supplies, Inc.
- Vector Wealth Strategies
- Tim & Cynthia Volin
- Vulcan Materials
- Dr. & Mrs. William Walker
- Warren & Simpson, P.C.
- Wear, Howell, Strickland, Quinn & Law
- Wells Fargo Bank
- Janne & Bill Wissell
- Mr. & Mrs. Carl Woods
- Jimmy & Tina Worley
- Mr. Matthew Young

EDUCATION DONORS

- Huntsville Hospital Urgent Care
- Modern Technology Solutions, Inc.
- Morgan County Legislative Offices
- Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area
- National Space Club- Huntsville
- Science Education Solutions, Inc.
- Walmart

GRAND OPENING SPONSORS

- Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association
- Athens State University
- Calhoun Community College
- Davidson Technologies, Inc.
- Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority
- Fite Building Company, Inc.
- Huntsville Hospital Urgent Care
- Redstone Federal Credit Union
- Regions Bank



“ Wanted an escape... got to play in **outer space**, built a **volcano** that erupted, went in the **woods** all in one location. **REALLY COOL PLACE.** ”

- Google reviewer Nichole Jarvis



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DECATUR, AL 35601
256.351.4505

#COOKMUSEUM
#LIFEISAMAZING
cookmuseum.org