



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



cook museum
of NATURAL SCIENCE®



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LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Brian Cook
- John Cook, Jr.
- Lyn Cook
- Leslie Cook
- Eric Miller



BRIAN COOK

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SCOTT MAYO
Executive Director



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- Greg Barnes
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- Angela Casciano
- Tami Reist
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- Tara Sandlin
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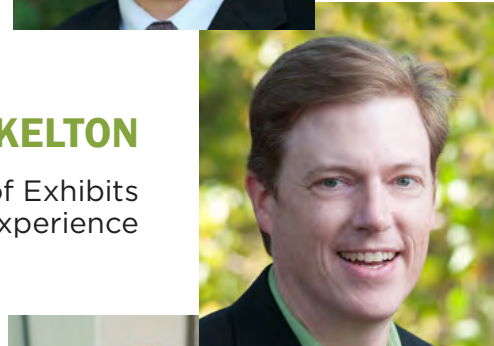
JOHN KELTON
Director of Exhibits & Visitor Experience



MARK WALLACE

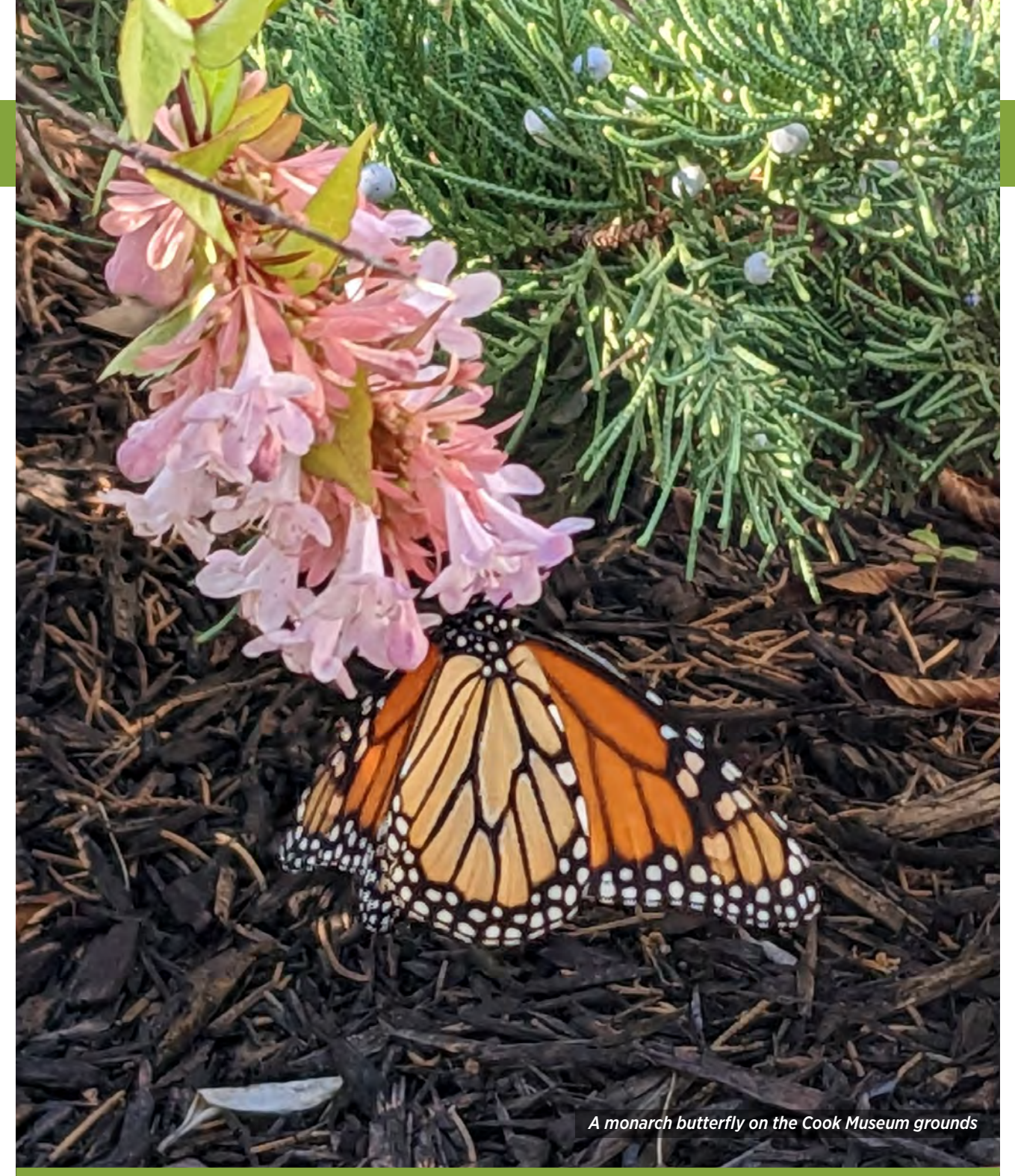
Senior Director of Administration

JEANNE PAYNE
Director of Development



JEANNE PAYNE

Director of Development



A monarch butterfly on the Cook Museum grounds



MISSION

Engage, excite, and educate visitors of all ages about the natural created world around us.



advantage of rapidly changing social and economic situations. If every day is a “new normal”, you learn to roll with it! Rescheduling a field trip, adjusting the times of a class, resetting a room for a banquet when the numbers change at the last minute – these are all now considered business as usual. Our goal throughout was to do our jobs in such a way that **our guests would enjoy the exact same exemplary experience as if all things had been normal.** The Museum is here to engage, excite, and educate, regardless of the inflation rate or the labor pool participation numbers.

One of the intentional endeavors of the staff during 2022 was continuing to **explore and strengthen relationships with other institutions** which were also dealing with their own post-pandemic challenges. The creativity and resources available across these institutions allowed for enhanced visitor experiences for all guests when **mutually beneficial cross-pollination** occurred. The sorts of things already in place or being explored for feasibility range from guest appearances of staff and live animals at each other’s institutional events to joint marketing/product offerings. Institutions involved in these talks and projects include Anniston Museums and Gardens, North Alabama Agriplex, U.S. Space & Rocket Center, and Huntsville Botanical Garden, just to name a few.

Finally, 2022 was a success because of all the wonderful people who worked to make it happen and all the supportive guests and donors who enjoyed the Museum and provided resources to keep it moving forward. As we enter 2023, we feel **the Museum is well-positioned to continue to provide an incredible experience to our guests** while also expanding and enhancing that experience and outreach. Life is amazing and it is our calling to show that to our visitors. As you can see in the rest of this Annual Report, we find that task very rewarding!

Executive Director

The tag line for the Jaws movie series was, “Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water...” That same sort of sentiment was, once again, part of our world for 2022 at the Cook Museum of Natural Science. Unfortunately, January began with a resurgence of the Covid virus in one of its many variations with the corresponding impact on visitors (especially field trips) and staff. Fast forward to the summer when inflation (primarily in the form of gas prices) put pressure on the disposable income of potential guests. Interspersed amongst these challenges, however, were all sorts of wonderful highlights. By the time we closed 2022 in December, the Museum had experienced its **most successful full year to date!**

Given all the hurdles faced since opening, the Museum staff has gotten quite well-versed in pivoting, adjusting, and taking full



EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT UPDATES

- **Installation of a kit fox** in the Arctic/Desert Exhibit
- **Installation of a musk ox** in the Arctic/Desert Exhibit
- **Installation of the Earth's Magnetic Shield Interactive**, a Southeastern Museum Conference Technology gold award winner for Gallery Installations

BEYOND THE MUSEUM

Director of Exhibits & Visitor Experience, **John Kelton**, led a session on **exhibit design and fabrication management** at the Southeastern Museum Conference in Rogers, Arkansas.

EXHIBITS BY THE NUMBERS

Visitors to the Exhibits in 2022	82,144
Visitors since opening in 2019	285,265

ANIMAL CARE

AN ENDANGERED ADDITION

Kale, an endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle, found a forever home with the Cook Museum in 2020.

Kale came to the Museum from the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, a facility that rescues and rehabilitates sea turtles and other marine animals so they can be released back into the wild.

Kale, while still a juvenile, was hooked by a recreational fisherman off a pier on Chesapeake Bay in Virginia in 2019. Due to the size of the hook, an endoscopic procedure could not remove the hook. Therefore, several invasive surgeries were required.

His wound did not fully heal and created scar tissue and a fistula, a hollow space where food and debris can get trapped and cause infections.

Due to the fistula, **Kale needs medical attention from time to time, making him a non-releasable sea turtle.**



CARING FOR KALE

Kale came off display in January 2022 and moved to the Museum's off-site facility to address health concerns.

Since that time, the Animal Care staff and the Museum's veterinarian have spent **over 800 man hours helping Kale recover**. In September 2022, he started getting his full appetite and attitude back, which was very encouraging. He continues to get better little by little.

Kale is making great progress in his recovery, and **we hope to have him back in the Oceans Tank in 2023!**



Live Animal Manager Cassandra Worlund adds a waterproof sealant to the bone cement bandage applied to Kale's shell.



CONTRIBUTE TO KALE'S CARE

Donate to Care for Kale by scanning this QR Code with your phone's camera or by visiting cookmuseum.org/kale.



A green diving beetle uses an air bubble like a scuba diver's tank of oxygen. These beetles poke the tip of their abdomen above the surface and trap air under their wing covers to breathe under water.

LIVE ANIMAL HIGHLIGHTS

- **New insect identification labels** were placed in the Wonderful World of Insects Exhibit to provide information on the different insects.
- **Two new juvenile American alligators were put on display** in the Discover Exhibit and the two larger alligators were returned to Alligator Alley in Summerdale, Alabama because they had outgrown the tank.

LIVE ANIMAL ENRICHMENT

- A new scenic log was installed in the **Rivers & Streams Freshwater Tank** that allows turtles to bask under the heat lamp and provides hiding places for fish.
- A new scenic insert for the **Live Hellbender Tank** was designed and installed for the Discover Exhibit.
- Members of the Animal Care team held a **Live Underwater Pumpkin Carving** in the Oceans Tank.





EDUCATION

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES, AND CAMPS

Students connect to nature through **hands-on educational activities** that have been developed by the Education Department to enhance students' curiosity and excitement about the observable natural world.

2022 EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS

Students who attended the
Museum Exhibits on Field Trips

14,641

Students who attended Education Classes

8,188

Students who attended public camps, including
Robotics Camp, A to Zoology, and more

703

Students who attended Aquarist, Herpetologist,
and Entomologist for a Day Camps

326





EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

The Museum's **three Education Classrooms** offer hands-on learning opportunities for all age levels.

- Salamander Classroom
- Maker Space
- Adventure Lab

FIELD TRIP CLASS TOPICS

The Education Department offers **Field Trip classes on 18 different topics**, including:

- Interesting Insects
- Alabama Biomes
- Weather Watchers
- States of Matter
- Electromagnetism: Science or Superpower
- All About Squid (Dissection)
- Echinoderm Investigation and Dissection

PROGRAMMING

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Cook Museum had a full calendar for 2022 with exciting programming for all ages and interests, including:

- Craft & Coloring Series
- Public Camps and Classes
- Live Animal Feedings
- Q&A with Animal Care
- Live Animal Presentations
- Member-Only Events
- Stories in the Store
- Sensory Friendly Hours
- Science on the Spot
- Presentación de Animales Vivos



PROGRAMMING BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Programs offered in 2022

299

Print-at-home scavenger hunts added online to Discovery Hub for visitors to enjoy

7



PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

- **Presentación de Animales Vivos** - The Museum offered Spanish-language programming for the first time! These four Live Animal Presentations were led by the Education Department.
- **Citizen Science Girl Scout Day and Boy Scouts of America Citizen Science Day** - Local Scouts were invited to visit the Museum and take part in special hands-on science activities. The Museum also provided an online resource to demonstrate how a visit to the Exhibits or an Education Class can help Girl Scouts meet specific badge requirements.
- **All About Birds Fun Day** - As part of a wide range of activities, the Museum partnered with Anniston Museums and Gardens staff to bring live birds to the event.



MEMBERSHIP

EXTRA SPECIAL BENEFITS

In addition to the regular Member benefits, Museum Members were able to enjoy events and specials, including:

- Gift card giveaway via Instagram
- A daily free cup of coffee from Nature’s Table during Have A BREW-tiful Day! for the month of February
- Valentine’s Member-Only Pop-Up Lounge!
- Two Museum Store gift set giveaways at events
- Member Appreciation Day with a Huntsville International Airport \$500 Breeze Airline gift voucher giveaway
- Double Discounts in the Museum Store and Nature’s Table on select dates in July and November
- September Smoothie BOGO at Nature’s Table



MEMBERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

Total Memberships sold or renewed in 2022 **2,086**

Number of states in which Museum Members reside **18**

VOLUNTEERS

A DEDICATED GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS

Volunteers are crucial to the operations of the Cook Museum! They assist in areas such as **Education, Animal Care, Exhibits, Administration, and even gift wrap** purchases made at the Museum Store near the holidays!

We are very grateful for all they do!

VOLUNTEERS BY THE NUMBERS

Hours volunteered in 2022	3,246
Volunteers who dedicated their time to Cook Museum	82
Volunteers who qualified in 2022 for the Bronze or Silver President's Volunteer Service Award	13



RECOGNITION

IN THE MEDIA

JOY Magazine

Full article with four-page spread in Spring 2022 print issue



Southern Living Magazine

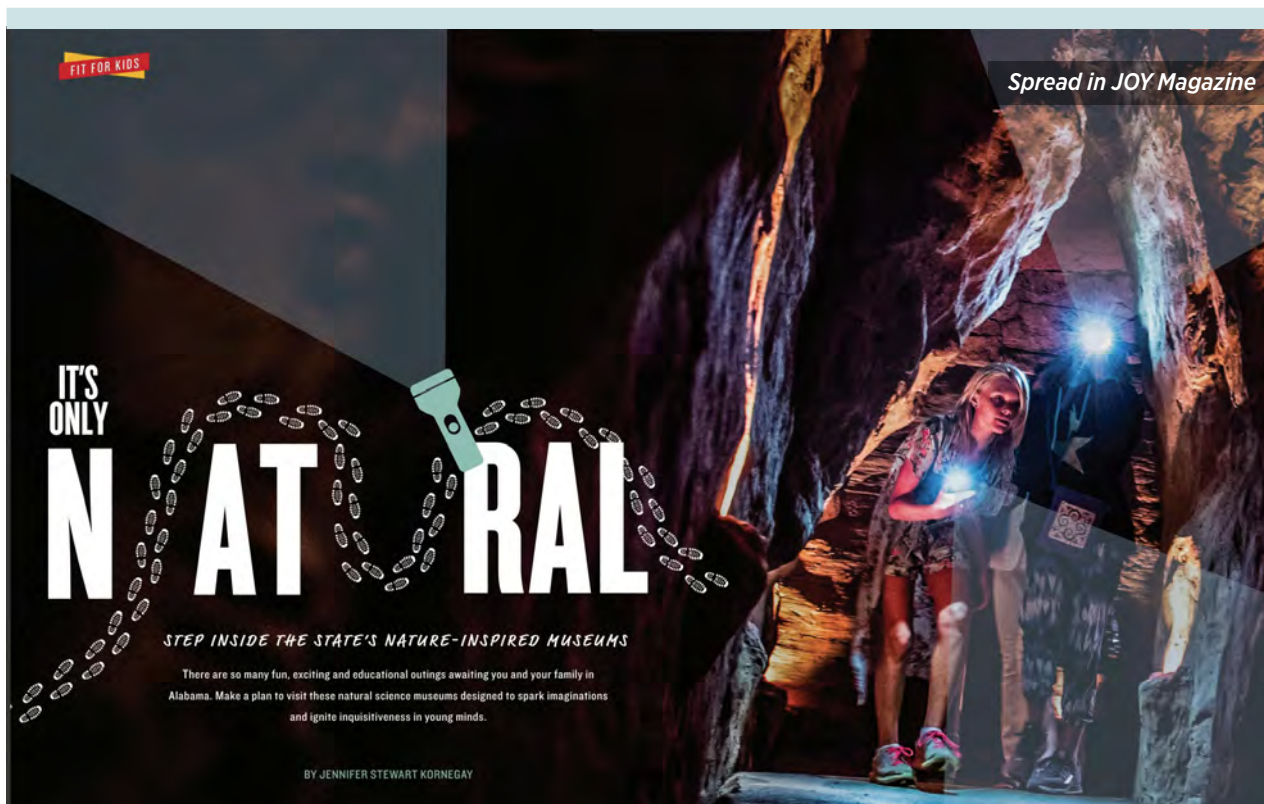
Mentioned in "12 Best Things to Do in Decatur, Alabama" article

Alabama Magazine

Full article in September/October 2022 print issue

Absolutely Alabama TV Segment

Chosen for a feature piece by Fred Hunter broadcasted state-wide



AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Rocket City Mom Family Favorite Award

Winner of Favorite Local Attraction Ages 5-9



Southeastern Museum Conference Awards

Winner of 10 Publication & Technology awards across multiple categories, including:

- Gallery Installations Gold:** Magnetic Shield Interactive
- Mailers & Calendars Gold:** 2021 Christmas Card

OUTREACH

IN THE COMMUNITY

Employees and volunteers promoted the Museum's mission and engaged the community through **marketing booths at numerous events** around North Alabama, including:

- **2022 Huntsville Homeschool Curriculum Show & Share**
- **Third Fridays in Downtown Decatur**
- **TVA Lake Guntersville Outdoor Recreation Symposium**
- **Redstone Arsenal's 25th Annual Oktoberfest**
- **North Alabama Trails and Recreation Expo in Decatur**
- **Downtown Decatur's Dia de los Muertos celebration**
- **Tools of the Trade Career Fair at Wallace State Community College**

EXPANDING OUTREACH

The Museum was able to expand its demographic reach this year with its **first Spanish-language marketing** both on social media and in-person.



EVENTS

BRINGING IN THE COMMUNITY

Cook Museum offers a variety of event spaces that include Monarch Hall, the Conference Room, Migratory Hall, the Courtyard, and Trek.

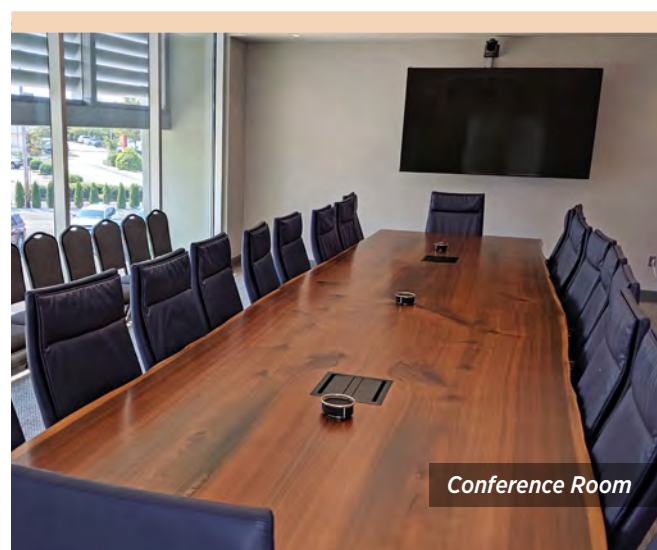
Over 270 events were held at the Museum in 2022.

Community leaders and corporations that utilized event spaces include:

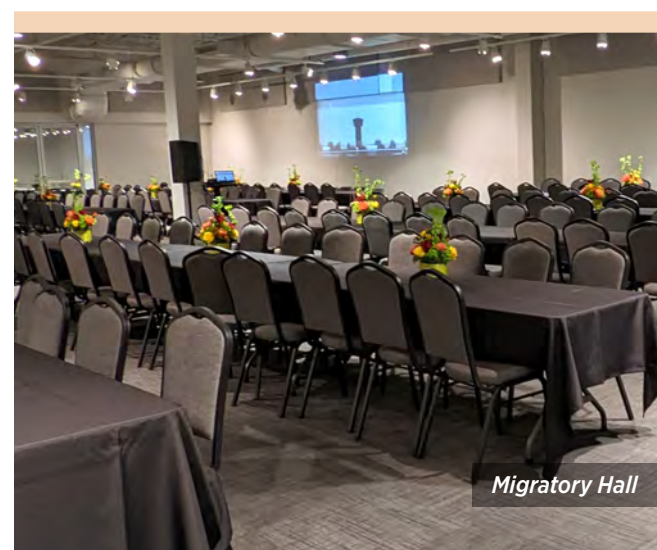
- **Nucor Steel**
- **Launch 2035**
- **Tennessee River Business Alliance**
- **Cerrowire**
- **and many more!**



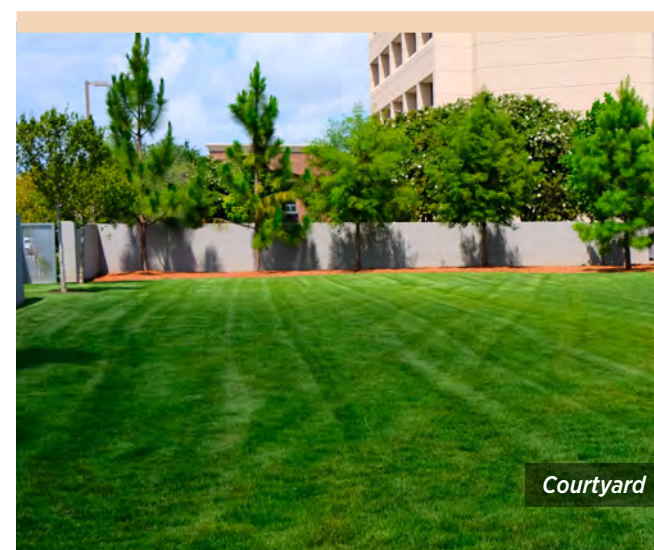
Monarch Hall



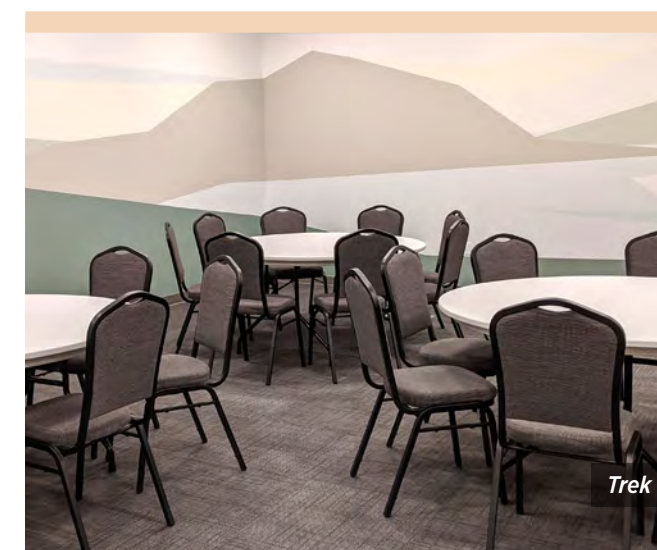
Conference Room



Migratory Hall



Courtyard



Trek



MUSEUM STORE

A NEW TRADITION IN THE MAKING

The Museum Store kicked off the 2022 holidays with some **free family fun at Winter Wonder**, an outdoor event in the Cook Museum Courtyard, as part of Downtown Decatur's Holiday Open House. There were inflatable slides, games, a take-home craft, a selfie station, and food available for purchase. Hopefully, this event can become a yearly tradition!

The Museum Store also offered free gift wrapping during the 2022 holiday season.

NATURE'S TABLE

OFFERING SOMETHING SPECIAL

Nature's Table at Cook Museum had a very successful year! They **provided thousands of lunches for field trips, camps, and events at the Museum**, while continuing to offer delicious, healthy options to local patrons.

They also added over a dozen new items to their catering menu and created two limited-time smoothies during the year.



Loretta Troup volunteering at the Museum Store gift wrapping station

DEVELOPMENT

CELEBRATING DONORS

Cook Museum held its **1st Annual Donor Celebration Day** event in December 2022 for donors at the \$1,000+ giving level!

Donors received four tickets to the Exhibits, refreshments, 20% discounts at the Museum Store & Nature's Table, and had a beautiful photo of their group taken at the event.



Sara Underhill, Grant Writer (left) & Dr. Jeanne Payne, Director of Development (right)

DEVELOPMENT BY THE NUMBERS

Capital Campaign donations received in 2022	\$120,000
Education Sponsorship Fund donations received in 2022	\$96,000+
Annual Fund donations received in 2022	\$14,600
Number of community grants received in 2022	10

The Cook Museum continues to thrive because of the support of so many amazing individuals and businesses. Museum donors are a vital part of the Museum's success!

Development Highlights:

- **Individuals and businesses continued to sponsor Exhibits and donate to the Capital Campaign which has now cumulatively reached over \$22.4 Million.**
- **A total of \$260k has been committed to schools through the Museum's Education Sponsorship Fund since its formation in 2020.**
- **1st Annual Donor Celebration Day held in 2022 for donors at the \$1,000+ giving level.**
- **Ten community grants applied for and received in 2022.**

Ways you can continue to support the Museum!

- **Sponsor one of the limited number of naming opportunities.**
- **Join the Legacy Society through planned giving.**
- **Donate land, stocks, or other non-cash items.**
- **Donate to the Annual Fund to support caring for the animals and the purchase of education materials.**
- **Donate to the Education Sponsorship Fund to help subsidize Field Trip and Education Class costs for students.**
- **Donate to Share the Love, the monthly giving campaign that supports the Museum through consistent donations.**
- **Donate to the Care for Kale campaign to help support our non-releasable Kemp's ridley sea turtle, Kale.**

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

Jeanne Payne

Director of Development

SPONSORING EDUCATION

Donors contributed over \$96,000 to the Education Sponsorship Fund in 2022!

The **Education Sponsorship Fund** subsidizes Exhibit admission and Education Class costs for students, which allows more students to visit the Museum and receive an equal opportunity for high-quality educational experiences.



2022 Education Sponsorship Fund Donors

The Boeing Company
 Senator Tom Butler
 Capital Power & Decatur Energy
 Representative Terri Collins
 Elisabeth Anne Uber Fund
 Representative Parker Moore
 Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area
 National Space Club - Huntsville
 Rotary Club of Decatur, Alabama
 Saint Gobain Corporation
 Loretta Purdy Spencer
 Tennessee Valley Authority
 Representative Andy Whitt



MUSEUM DONORS

LIFE IS AMAZING 2015 - 2022 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DONORS

Founding Visionaries \$1,000,000+	Founding Leaders \$100,000 - \$299,999
<p>Anonymous</p> <p>The Caring Foundation of Blue Cross & Blue Shield Alabama</p> <p>City of Decatur</p> <p>The Cook Family</p> <p>Corteva Agriscience™</p> <p>Davidson Technologies, Inc.</p>	<p>3M Decatur</p> <p>Alabama Farmers Cooperative, Inc.</p> <p>The Baker Foundation</p> <p>The Baron Family</p> <p>Dr. Marc & Sheryl Bendickson</p> <p>Mitch & Monya Claborn</p> <p>Daikin America, Inc.</p>
Founding Partners \$300,000 - \$999,999	<p>Decatur Coca-Cola Bottling Company & The Troup Family</p> <p>Theresa & Gary Donald Family</p> <p>Bruce & Ida Dunbar / The Dunbar Family Foundation</p> <p>Family Security Credit Union</p> <p>GE Appliances, a Haier company</p> <p>Hexcel Corporation</p>
<p>Alpha Foundation, Inc.</p> <p>The Cook Family <i>in honor of the employees of Cook's Pest Control</i></p> <p>Shirley & George McCrary <i>in honor of Cortner Crumlish, Waggoner McCrary, Gamble McCrary, & Eliza McCrary</i></p> <p>Nucor Steel of Decatur, LLC</p>	



Founding Leaders
continued

Honda of Decatur

Huntsville International Airport

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in honor of Erica, Ginny, Nolan, & Allison Light

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Founding Friends
\$10,000 - \$99,999

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in memory of Mr. & Mrs. John R. Cook, Sr.

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Dr. Elizabeth Hendrix Lusk
Dr. McKinley Bragg Hendrix Barrett, Bragg, Mary Blythe, Jane Randall, Brewer, & Mae Margaret

Brandenburg, Inc.

Building Construction Associates, Inc.

The Butcher Family
in honor of Trevor, Emily, Katie Claire, Colin, & Emmett

Dr. Ray & Sandra Cain

Dr. Mary Jane Caylor
in memory of John Will Caylor

Cerrowire

The Ken & Elizabeth Chandler Family
in honor of Stacy, Brad, & Krista

Carla & Gary Cobb

Computer Support Systems, Inc.

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Crestwood Medical Center

Cricket By The Creek

Mr. & Mrs. Wesley Crunkleton

John & Debbie Davidson

The Decatur Daily

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Decatur Morgan County Chamber of Commerce
in honor of John Seymour

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Decatur Morgan Hospital

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in memory of Col. James C. Isbell

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in honor of Charlie, Jerri Lynn, Tae, & Jacie

David, Sherry, Ryan, & Austin Jones

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& Roman*

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*in honor of Ella Kyle, Parker,
Amelia, Sam, & Barton Payne*

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Peoples Bank of Alabama

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& Chandler*

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*in honor of Mary Bibb,
Virginia, & Annie*

Red Sage
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Clyde & Mary Jane Sasser

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*in honor of Charlie Trimble,
Hudson Scott, & Andrew Scott*

SCSWORX

Sexton Foundation

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Dr. & Mrs. William
Arthur Sims

Dr. & Mrs. Jonathan South
*in honor of Sheridan,
Lee, & Lydia*

Southeastern Freight
Lines, Inc.

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Stovall Marks Insurance

Surgical Associates
of North Alabama

Syngenta Turf & Landscape

Drs. Chris & Stephanie
Teichmiller

Temple, Inc.

Tennessee Valley Authority

Paul & May Thomas
in honor of Sofia & Ethan

The Thompson Foundation

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Torch Technologies, Inc.

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Valley Rubber, LLC

Mike & Weety Vickery

Robin & Linda Wade



Dr. C. Thomas White

White Oak Transportation
*in honor of Michael
Limbaugh, Jr. &
Sarah Alice Limbaugh*

Steve & Ginger Willard

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Rick Williams
*in honor of Emma
Katherine Williams*

Willo Products Company

Worthey Family Foundation /
Jim & Jan Worthey

Wyker Family Foundation

The John & June Wyker
Charitable Foundation

Other Support
\$25 - \$9,999

Alabama Cleaning Service

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Armstrong Relocation
Company Huntsville, LLC

Dr. Deborah Barnhart

Dr. Russell & Sandra Barr

Don & Mary Allen Barthel

The Boeing Company

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Bowling

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Crystal Baldwin Brown

Thomas & Jeanne Brown

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Buchanan

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Cabela's

Mr. Joe W. Campbell

Dr. Robert & Opal Campbell

Central Life Sciences

Dr. & Mrs. Stephen Chandler

Chorba Contracting

Clark Stoneworks, LLC



Other Support
continued

Greg & Whitney Clemons
 Tom & Terri Collins
 COLSA Corporation
 Columbia International University
in honor of Dr. Lyn Cook
 Mr. & Mrs. John Coon
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 Decatur Morgan County Minority Development Association
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in honor of Charley & Miller
 Mr. & Mrs. Josh McDowell

Dr. Jolly & Becky McKenzie
 Charles & Tawnya Millard
 Morgan County Education Retirees Association
 Morgan County Legislative Office
 Morgan County Master Gardeners Association
 National Space Club-Huntsville
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 The Perry Company, Inc.
 PNC Financial Services Group
 Patricia Pruitt
 Reynolds Funeral Home, Inc.
 Cynthia Richardson
in honor of Debbie Moore
 Mr. Thomas Ritchie
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 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Roth
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 Southern Custom Exhibits
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 Janne & Bill Wissell
 Mr. & Mrs. Carl Woods
 Jimmy & Tina Worley
 Mr. Matthew Young



CAUGHT AT THE COOK



Mr. & Mrs. Bill Wyker and family,
Wyker Family Foundation

2022 ANNUAL FUND DONORS

Jade Level \$1,000 - \$4,999

- Tolbert & Mary Epps
- William & Deborah Jones
- Mark & Deborah Smith
- Ward Family Giving Fund
- Jimmy & Tina Worley
in honor of Museum Staff

Turquoise Level \$100 - \$499

- Anonymous
- Penny Billings
- Jack Brewer

- Charles Carney
- Michael Emerine
- The Gecks
- Harry & Gus Greenbaum
- Samuel Gregory
- Joey Harris
- Robin Jackson
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