

FALL/WINTER 2023

The Ruthmere Record

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RUTHMERE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

BY TOM MYERS, BOARD MEMBER & EVENT CHAIR

What a grand night to celebrate the Ruthmere Museum's Golden Anniversary! On September 8, over 140 guests were treated to an outdoor evening filled with music, food, drinks, flowers and the chance to walk through the beautiful Ruthmere house.



After guests made an entrance through the gold and black balloon arch, they were able to stop and grab a drink at the bar, listen to the melodic sounds of the Notre Dame String Trio, and then have their pictures taken by Robin Crystal Photography in the garage with ornate antique cars. They were then able to enjoy a selection of delicious hors d'oeuvres provided by Essence of Elkhart, the Hotel Elkhart, and Navarre Catering, all while in the presence of over 70 vases of stunning dahlias throughout the Ruthmere grounds provided by the Elkhart Dahlia Society. These floral arrangements by Rusty and Anita Ritchie were supported by the Jonathan Tuff Ruthmere Beautiful Fund.

Then came the evening's presentation, including a grand proclamation from Elkhart Mayor Rod Roberson announcing September 8, 2023 as Ruthmere Anniversary Day. In attendance during the next part of the presentation by Executive Director Bill Firstenberger were representatives of the Beardsley and Deputy families and the Elkhart community honoring Ruthmere's past and present. Bill then brought board member Jackson Beck on to talk about the future of the Ruthmere campus and the public kick-off of the capital campaign for the foundation's

newest project: the development of the Beardsley Carriage House as the new Beardsley Discovery Center. After many toasts to the terrific accomplishments of the last 50 years and the future, guests listened and danced under a canopy of lights to the great music and singing of the Janet Gunn Band. Many also took advantage of the opportunity to walk through the house and listen to Denny Olsen playing piano in the game room along with a slide show commemorating the 50 years of Ruthmere Museum.

And of great importance, I would like to extend a special thank you to my Gala Committee: Jim Kelly, Patty Peterson Miller, Andrew Skipper, Kathy Fledderman, Bill Firstenberger and Joy Olsen, for their support and participation in organizing this event. The whole event would not have been possible though, without the support of the many underwriters and sponsors. Our gratitude goes out to all who contributed to this event for the many guests to enjoy!



THE PAST...

Opening Day, September 8, 1973



...AND THE PRESENT

50th Anniversary Gala, September 8, 2023



JOAN BEARDSLEY NORRIS

BY ED BEARDSLEY, FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

I am writing today to share a heartfelt sadness and at the same time joy at the passing of our beloved “Jo.” Joan Beardsley Norris was best described as a “one of a kind.” Jo’s insight and creativity are the fondest memories for me. I will also credit her and Robert Beardsley for getting me involved with Ruthmere nearly 15 years ago. Their dedication to the organization are the cornerstones with which we accomplish the Ruthmere mission.

Recently, I was honored to have celebrated her life with close family in her Arizona home of 50 years. Jo and her husband Carter built this home before the town’s incorporation. This gives you an idea of their love of family and Arizona. Carter and Jo raised a wonderful family there and she passed peacefully in this home. The celebration of her life was a gratefulness of knowing her, combined with a sadness of her being missed. Many of the family shared stories throughout the evening. It was a very special celebration for a special woman.

Below are quotes from her obituary:

Jo was a true California girl, born in Los Angeles, raised in Upland, graduated high school from Bishop’s School in La Jolla, and then received a Bachelor’s degree in English Literature from UC Berkeley. After moving to Arizona in 1956, Jo focused on raising her three children in a beautiful and loving home in Paradise Valley. The children all attended Phoenix Country Day School, and Jo was well known for supporting numerous school functions and a steadfast commitment to education. She traveled extensively with the family providing a shared experience of many different cultures and a deep appreciation for the planet and the environment.

Always willing to help others, Jo served as President of the Phoenix Art Museum League; Board President of Planned Parenthood of Central and Northern Arizona; and was very active in Girl Scouts Arizona Cactus-Pine where she helped facilitate many leadership workshops and became the initiating member of the Elder Circle. After achieving her Masters Degree in Psychology from Arizona State University, Jo co-founded the RIM Institute where she gathered leading

experts to deliver workshops on subjects such as the evolution of consciousness, spirituality, and wellness. Throughout her long life, Jo remained true to her aspiration to be an ambassador to the light. She cultivated a daily practice of gratitude, radiating a loving energy that touched the hearts and minds of those who knew her. Jo served as a touchstone for many to find connection and joy. Her wisdom and guidance are now treasured memories. Her love lives on.

Some final comments from me:

Jo set a very high standard – all of us are privileged to have known her and are dedicated to continue the mission. I met with Jo approximately 2 weeks before she passed. She set the bar high. Jo, honored to have known you. See you again “on the other side” and my very best to Carter.

Love, “Eddie” Beardsley



2024 POTTERY FAIR - NEW PARTNERSHIP, NEW NAME

BY CAROLYN BONANNO, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

The 2023 3rd Annual Ruthmere Museum Pottery Fair was another wonderful success. Fifteen artists presented their creative work for our viewing pleasure and for purchase. Attendance was strong with artists reporting excellent sales. Ruthmere always strives to bring the best in the arts to Elkhart County and is proud to announce a new partnership with The Northern Indiana Clay Alliance to further this effort.

The Northern Indiana Clay Alliance is a registered non-profit organization working to preserve our region's 250+ year history as a ceramic hotbed. This budding partnership between Ruthmere and NICA brings together one of our region's premier historical sites and an arts-focused organization striving to provide new opportunities for its members. The 2024 Ruthmere Ceramic Showcase on Saturday, July 13 looks to be the largest to date as our two organizations work together to bring nationally known artists together in one historic location. Mark this on your calendar for 2024!



CHRISTMAS, TIFFANY STYLE!

BY ANDREA HUTSLAR, OUTREACH CURATOR

What is Christmas without some dazzling, colorful lights?

But these aren't just your typical Christmas lights. Yes, we will have plenty of the traditional strung lights throughout the house to make the trees sparkle and shine, but we're talking about something a bit more fashionable: Tiffany Glass. The theme for Ruthmere's Christmas tours this year is "Christmas, Tiffany Style!" and we will be decking the halls with several Tiffany or Tiffany-style lamps and accents. This prismatic display will undoubtedly bring a jaw-dropping awe to the usual beautiful decor of Ruthmere at Christmastime.



Ruthmere already has a few Tiffany glass pieces in its collection, like the gorgeous "Oriental Poppies" chandelier hanging in the dining room. The Tiffany glass is always a favorite of guests when they visit for tours, and it just has a way of making the room light up - so to speak. Alongside the pieces of our permanent collection, we will fill the house with other loaned stained glass pieces from local collectors such as Michael Thomas. This kaleidoscopic display of lights will be complemented by matching Christmas decorations.

As usual, the Christmas tours will begin the weekend after Thanksgiving, starting on November 25 and running through the end of the year. The last day to see the 2023 Christmas decorations will be Saturday, December 30. Reservations are strongly encouraged at Christmas time - it's one of our busiest times of the year! Call (574) 264-0330 to make your reservation.

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Membership Coordinator
Mark Doddington at (574)
264-0330 ext. 107 or
mdoddington@ruthmere.org.**

BEARDSLEY DISCOVERY CENTER - CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

BY WILLIAM A. FIRSTENBERGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Beardsley Discovery Center project has surfaced at just the right time to fulfill the needs of our community and ripen the fruits of Ruthmere Campus as we celebrate 50 years of museum service.

With a solid foundation of past programming success and financial stability upon which to build, the Ruthmere Campus is primed to take its next step to continue delivering exceptional quality experiences by adding this strategic facility that honors both its historic past and a new state-of-the-art visitor engagement.

The 2020 acquisition of the historic Havilah Beardsley stables and carriage house has provided the opportunity to re-examine how we operate Ruthmere Campus, and offer this once-in-a-lifetime chance to demonstrate the community benefits of “historic preservation in action.” By repurposing the stables and carriage house into the Beardsley Discovery Center, we will simultaneously preserve the past and invent the future.

We learned during our strategic planning consultation that our community values what we do, but they want to see Ruthmere deliver more dynamic original programming while offering greater access to everyone. The Beardsley Discovery Center incorporates this invaluable input, increasing our capacity to serve the public while improving every visitor’s experience.

Our goals are ambitious, but they are worthwhile and within our grasp. We have a total project budget of \$1,384,000 which includes a substantial building endowment goal of \$221,000 that will help support new operational and maintenance costs. The Ruthmere Board of Directors have committed \$400,000 of the organization’s own resources to the project, and as of the printing of this issue of *The Ruthmere Record* we have secured \$389,000 in private donations and our grants department has \$570,000 in pending grant applications for the project. It would be naïve to think that we will receive 100% of the grant monies requested, but regardless, we are clearly in the home stretch of this campaign and we need help from everyone in the community to finish strong!

To learn the many details of this project, go to our web site home page Ruthmere.org. There you will find all the details that explain how we intend to accomplish this bold vision. While there, we invite you to participate in the capital campaign and help us get started today!



SIXTH PIANO COMPETITION - A TRULY INTERNATIONAL EVENT

BY MARK DODDINGTON, MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Ruthmere hosted its Sixth Annual Robert Buchanan Beardsley Memorial Piano Competition on Saturday, September 9, in the Ruthmere Game Room. Following the tradition of the previous five years, the competition had no residency or age restrictions, two facts that were particularly emphasized by this year's diverse finalists.

First Prize, \$1000 and the opening slot in Ruthmere's Fall Concert Series on October 12, was awarded to Ecuador native Pablo Valladares, a student at Roosevelt University in Chicago, where he is pursuing his Performance Diploma in piano. Valladares, who hails from Quito, took top honors following his presentation of W.A. Mozart's Sonata in C major, first movement; Frédéric Chopin's Impromptu No. 1 in A-flat major; Chopin's Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat minor; and Moisés Moleiro's "Joropo."



Pablo Valladares, 6th Beardsley Piano Competition Winner

Second Prize, a check for \$300, went to Italy's Luca Pompilio, a piano student at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. Pompilio also holds a Bachelor's degree

in physics. He performed pieces by Alexander Scriabin, Joseph Haydn, and Lowell Liebermann.

Third Prize, a \$200 check, was awarded to Wilson David Casallas Palomo of Colombia, who is currently studying piano performance at Western Michigan University. Casallas Palomo performed Johannes Brahms' "Six Pieces for Piano."

Also taking part in the finals was Grand Rapids, Michigan, native Faith Yeha Lee. A student at Forest Hills Northern High School, 17-year-old Lee is the youngest finalist in the Beardsley Prize's six-year history. Lee, like the other finalists, has already established herself on the competitive stage. She performed pieces by Chopin and Edwin York Bowen.

Two additional finalists were selected to participate, filling out the traditional six slots, but were forced to withdraw for various reasons. All finalists, with the exception of Valladares, are eligible to enter the competition again.

Interestingly, 2023 marked the first year no Indiana students entered the competition. For the past several years, the competition has had a number of finalists from the IU Bloomington program, one of the largest in America.

Judging this year's competition were three Doctors of Music, all of whom have performed concerts at Ruthmere in the past. Nicholas Roth, an Elkhart native and longtime friend of Ruthmere, judged the competition for the first time this year, traveling from his post at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Winston Choi, of Roosevelt University in Chicago (though not a teacher of Valladares), has judged the Beardsley Prize in the past. The third appointment to the judges' panel was Dr. Luke Norell of Goshen College. Norell, along with his wife, Dr. Mary Rose Norell, has judged the competition several times. Both have also performed as a duo at Ruthmere on several occasions.

LINCOLN PENNY STORY HOUR

By *WILLIAM A. FIRSTENBERGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

Our society and culture have little by little been pulling apart at the seams. Differences in ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, political views and moral perspectives have become rebranded as “wedge issues” that have been used to divide and separate. Gone are the past celebrations of distinct backgrounds that provided the diverse gene pool strength of a mongrel mutt, and instead they have been replaced with a tribal self-identity that idealizes silos and an “us versus them” mentality.

The United States of America is an experimental idea, and its ability to continue is being tested. The success of this experiment depends upon self-government, and the trust that its citizens want to see continued self-government. Those who do, know that diversity and unity are intrinsically connected-- they are two sides of the same coin. We are simultaneously many and one.

When forces attempt to divide and separate us, what we need is an everyday reminder, a common unmistakable symbol that resets our compass. Such a symbol exists—the Lincoln Penny. Go get one now to take a closer look. Here is the American experiment at both the micro and the macro levels. When we examine it closely, we are forced to reflect on Abraham Lincoln the President, his motives, his decisions, and his enduring legacy as the preserver of our nation at its greatest moment of crisis. The simple word “Liberty” to the left of his profile rings truer now than it ever has before, recognizing the freedoms expressed by each of us as individuals, and yet, the penny itself, being indivisible in its singularity, its “oneness” feels surprisingly immense.

In this often cast aside piece of unwanted change, we each carry the perfect symbol of the American experiment alive in our hands. If we search between the couch cushions and in the glove compartments, desk drawers and piggy banks of our lives we may unearth a whole host of Lincoln pennies. Perhaps then we may re-discover in a flash of illumination that these pennies, as wide in variety of condition and color as the American population, are all of equal value.

The Ruthmere Museum is proud to announce a new FREE program series, the Lincoln Penny Story Hour, launching on Lincoln’s birthday, February 12, 2024. The LPSH is not a fund raiser, it’s a consciousness raiser! On six historically important dates throughout 2024, Ruthmere will invite a member of the community to read an age-appropriate children’s book to children and their families. But this is a story hour with a specific purpose. These stories will be reflections of each reader’s distinct background, and will communicate the values of diversity, unity and liberty.

Every child will receive a Lincoln Penny souvenir in a keepsake jacket as a reminder of why this experience is important. By respectfully and authentically learning from others, together we will make our world a better place for new generations who we trust will keep the American experiment alive for everyone forever. If you are interested in being a Lincoln Penny Story Hour sponsor, call Executive Director Bill Firstenberger.



NEW NAMES MEET FAMILIAR FACES

By MARK DODDINGTON, MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Ruthmere’s 2023 Fall Concert Series is about to get underway. This year, we are proud to welcome a mixture of new artists and familiar names—some more than others.

Leading off the year, per tradition, is the winner of the Sixth Annual Robert Buchanan Beardsley Memorial Piano Competition, Pablo Valladares. A native of Quito, Ecuador, Valladares triumphed in September with his performance of Mozart’s Sonata in C major, first movement; Frédéric Chopin’s Impromptu No. 1 in A-flat major; Chopin’s Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat minor; and Moisés Moleiro’s “Joropo.”

Valladares will be presented with his \$1000 first prize check and winner’s certificate following his concert. His program for Thursday, October 12, has not yet been announced.

October 26, again a Thursday, will bring us violinist Jessica Tong and pianist Michael Sheppard. Tong, a native of Canada, has won multiple awards in her native land and elsewhere for her virtuosic performances. Philadelphia native Sheppard has likewise won acclaim around the world for his skills at the keyboard. Together, they grace the Ruthmere Game Room for the first time this year.

A finalist in the 2022 Piano Prize Competition, Ohio-born Tumaini Sango gave a staggering performance, thus earning him a well-deserved spot in this year’s series. Sango will be performing on Thursday, November 9. He is an accomplished young pianist, sought out for both public and private events, and shows tremendous promise in the coming years.

Closing out the Fall Concert Series on Saturday, November 25, Elkhart son Nicholas Roth will be joined by the Euclid Quartet for a one-of-a-kind finale. Roth, who spent much of his youth practicing piano in Ruthmere’s Game Room, has traditionally graced us with his post-Thanksgiving concerts. This year, he combines his wealth of talent with the Euclid Quartet, a string ensemble originally formed in Ohio in 1998. Consisting of Jameson Cooper, Luis Enrique Vargas, Aviva Hakanoglu, and Justin Goldsmith, the Euclid Quartet has performed at Ruthmere before. This will mark the first time they have performed with Roth.

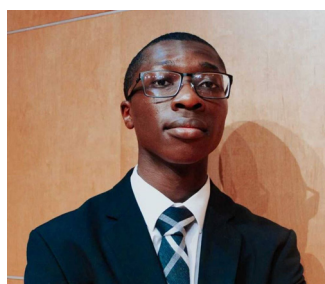
Ticket prices have changed for this year’s concerts! **Member tickets are now only \$20.00 per seat**, while non-member tickets are now \$50.00 per seat. Non-member season passes are also available for \$125.00. For information on the concerts, membership, sponsorship opportunities, or to book seats, go online at www.ruthmere.org, or call (574) 264-0330.



October 12 -
Pablo Valladares
Sponsor: Wade Mayberry



October 26 -
Jessica Tong & Michael Sheppard
Sponsor: James Rieckhoff



November 9 -
Tumaini Sango
Sponsor: Marie Smith



November 25-
Nicholas Roth & the Euclid Quartet
Sponsors: Terry Trimmer (Roth) and Bob & Gail Martin (Euclid)

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BENHAM WEST DOCUMENTARY SPARKS IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS

By LOIS TOMASZEWSKI, GRANTS COORDINATOR

Ruthmere marked an important federal holiday this year – Juneteenth – with the free public screenings of the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary documentary, *What Happened at Benham West: African American Stories of Community, Displacement, and Hope*.

This documentary film examined the history of Benham West, an African American neighborhood in Elkhart, Indiana. Benham West was forcibly segregated in the 1920s yet became a thriving community for Black families and businesses over the following decades. The community was cleared in the 1970s in the name of urban renewal—yet very little was rebuilt or renewed. *What Happened at Benham West* tells the neighborhood’s story through the voices of 17 African American elders who lived it.

Held on Monday, June 19, the three free screenings were well attended, with all available seating reserved. This included an ADA accessible site in the Ruthmere garage.

After each showing, discussions followed that fostered greater understanding of what life was like for many Elkhart residents in turbulent times before and after segregation. Ruthmere’s connection to the African American community in those years was through Miles Laboratories, which had discriminatory hiring practices until the 1960s when Civil Rights Legislation mandated equal employment opportunities.

Some of the first African American hires recalled that experience in the documentary.

Executive Director Bill Firstenberger remarked how Ruthmere’s partnership with documentary producers for this Juneteenth showing at Ruthmere was symbolic in nature. As the documentary pointed out, people who lived in Benham West were not welcomed by those who lived north of the railroad tracks in Elkhart. Now, in 2023, Ruthmere demonstrated that it is a place that is open to all.



The stories of Benham West are also being further detailed in an upcoming book.

Juneteenth is one of the federal holidays observed at Ruthmere as part of the Patriotic Series, sponsored by KeyBank. Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery, two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, when enslaved African Americans in Texas were read the Emancipation Proclamation and slavery was abolished in the United States.

LESSONS ON A PROPER ENGLISH TEA

By JOY OLSEN, COLLECTIONS MANAGER

This small article is dedicated to a country that has captured my heart - ENGLAND! The memories made during a trip I just returned from will last me a lifetime. The warm and wonderful people of Derby strove to make me feel incredibly welcomed and helped me to understand what a true British tea is all about.

My husband and I just returned from a “Taste of England” tour. I wanted more knowledge about serving a proper English tea experience. Anyone can serve a tea, slap a few English muffins on a plate, and call it good. We can dress the part and act like we know what we are doing - serve from the right, remove from the left, freshen pots, smile, and be courteous. But is it enough? When you serve anything at Ruthmere, you better know what you are doing. I needed more information; I needed to go to THE SOURCE!

Five years ago, my husband, Denny, and I flew to London to experience any and all things *Downton Abbey*. During that trip, we had a tea at a very old tea room, The Bridge Tea Room at Bradford-on-Avon. (See the Spring/Summer *Ruthmere Record* from 2018). I was pleasantly surprised by how close the teas I direct were to this style we experienced in England. I felt very good about that, but if I ever started and ran a tea business, I better darn well know the business. This would help us at Ruthmere, too!

Our guide for this year’s trip was the creator, and now my friend, Tina Jesson. She is straight from Derbyshire, England, and owned and ran four tea rooms in Indianapolis several years ago. Upon returning to England, Tina began creating and guiding tour groups, taking them through York, Derby, Ashbourne, and many, many more areas throughout the country. Check out “Tina’s Traditional Tours” for other fantastic trips. Tina is an expert in the

tea business and was patient with me as I constantly picked her brain, asking question after question about her knowledge of the tea business. She guided us into so many tea experiences on this trip and tried desperately to have me gain entrance into the fabulous tea room kitchens. The list of tea experiences we were offered were:

- Light tea at Millfield’s Farm, Derbyshire (ca. 1700)
- Cream tea on an 1800s steam train in Wirksworth Station, Matlock
- Afternoon tea buffet at the seat of Duke of Devonshire known as Chatsworth Estate, Bakewell
- Afternoon tea at the Emma Bridewater Pottery Factory, Stoke-on-Trent
- Afternoon tea at the Elmbank Hotel, the medieval town of York
- Afternoon tea at the Tissington Hall estate, Ashbourne



For every group photo taken at all these locations, we would raise our teacups and shout, “TEA!” I still chuckle to myself when I think about us crazy Americans doing that so exuberantly.

So what did I learn about the tea business on this trip? How and what can I apply to our teas at Ruthmere? Let me tell you - volumes, too much to share in this article. But what I am proudest of is to say we are doing a bang up job and a very close version of British tea. Our teas are

so successful, in fact, that we have added a SECOND Tea with Mrs. Claus this year! Registration opens November 1, and the teas will take place on December 3 and 10.

Teas at Ruthmere can only get better! With this wonderful Tea Team and a fantastic pastry chef, Doni Watson, there’s no way we can go wrong. If we can’t get you to England, we’ll bring England to you! Now raise your teacup and shout with us... “TEA!”

RUTHMERE IS SUPPORTED BY ITS MEMBERSHIP, PRIVATE DONATIONS, PLANNED GIFTS, AND LEGACIES.

VOLUNTEER WITH RUTHMERE

BY CAROLYN BONANNO, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Over the past 50 years Ruthmere has depended on its volunteers and they have never let us down. We'd like to say a big THANK YOU to all the volunteers past and present who have given so much to Ruthmere Museum. We couldn't have done it without you! If you'd like to become a volunteer at Ruthmere we are always looking for new volunteers to join our team, and we invite you to explore our opportunities below:

Docent Tour Guide: As a docent, you help visitors of all ages discover local history and heritage through insightful and educational tours of both the Havilah Beardsley House and Ruthmere Museum.

Gardener or Grounds Beautification: Do you enjoy gardening or wish to take it up as a hobby? Then consider helping our Campus Gardener plant flowers in the gardens and tend the Ruthmere grounds. We also have other projects around campus that help our museum stay beautiful year-round!

Special Events: We can always use the extra helping hands for set-up and tear down at Ruthmere special events, or for helping to run the show by checking guests in, running booths, or keeping supplies stocked.

Office Clerk: Are you detail oriented to help with mailings and filings, etc.?

If you are interested in becoming a Ruthmere Volunteer, email cbonanno@ruthmere.org or call 574-264-0330 ext. 101.

