

CAMPAIGN FOR THE SOUTH FLORIDA MUSEUM

# CONNECT.

## CREATING PATHWAYS

**Update:** January 2015

### *From the Campaign Chair*

We are thrilled to launch the *Connect* Campaign for the South Florida Museum. I am honored to be involved during this transformational time. The Museum's Board has created a long-term vision that further develops the Museum into an innovative learning destination and cultural hub. It also positions us as a regional leader in the museum field and enhances our service to surrounding communities.

Our focus is to create inspiring visitor experiences through excellent exhibitions and programming, while providing a vital resource for our educational partners (including the Manatee County School District, USF Sarasota-Manatee, New College, Ringling College of Art + Design and State College of Florida). The Museum is also an economic engine for the region, so investment in the Museum has far-reaching impact.

The *Connect* Campaign is the culmination of many years of work building on accomplishments and investments in the Museum since the 1940s to extend our exceptional standards. As a fourth-generation resident of Manatee County, I've grown up with the jewel that is the South Florida Museum and seen the many changes that have come to the Suncoast, especially in the past 25 years. Once thought of as a retirement community, this area is now filled with young families. We've seen growth in population and in the economy, and we're seeing the revitalization of downtown. It's time to reflect that revitalization, growth, and change in the Museum's exhibits, spaces and experiences.

I am very pleased to announce that we have raised more than 80% of the \$12 million goal of the *Connect* Campaign. We have received very generous lead gifts including \$1.3 million from the Mosaic Foundation toward the Mosaic Backyard Universe.

It is a true pleasure both to share these exciting plans with long-time donors while seeing their continued pride in the Museum and to see the enthusiasm in new supporters who want to help create new resources for the region. Thank you to all who have already made a gift to the *Connect* Campaign – we have wonderful momentum!



My grandfather was one of the Museum's founders, and I can assure you that those visionaries would be incredibly proud of where we are and where we're headed. I look forward to creating the Museum of the future with you.

William Blalock  
*Connect* Campaign Chair

## Components of the *Connect Campaign*

### **The Mosaic Backyard Universe**

This new learning resource for the region will be a two-story interactive exhibition and learning space for children ages 2-8 and their families. Designed to be the familiar setting of a backyard, it includes an outdoor area and addresses STEM concepts.

### **The Commons**

A new lobby/gathering space to connect the Mosaic Backyard Universe to the rest of the Campus will create room for larger public programs and school groups. It also addresses the community need for space for larger events. A new Museum store and café will also be in this area.

### **Aquarium Upgrades**

Expansions will provide new holding pools for rehabilitating manatees and work space for staff, as well as a new receiving area for both lettuce delivery and for arriving and departing rehab manatees. A new chiller and heating system for the manatee pools is also included.

### **Renovation of Existing Exhibition Areas**

An enhanced "storyline" connects the ideas and assets of the Museum, building on the foundation already in place. Many exhibitions will be updated, new areas developed and more items from our collections displayed. New exhibits will allow for easy updating to include new scientific developments.

### **Pathways Program Development**

The *Pathways* Program integrates technology into public programs and student field trips, allowing customization for themes, grade-levels and learning styles. *Pathways* creates new dynamic experiences based on individual interest each time a person visits by linking objects and stories throughout the Museum. This revolutionary teaching tool will transform school field trip learning opportunities by providing a way to evaluate student learning and knowledge during a field trip.

### **Planetarium Technology Upgrades**

State-of-the-art, world-class upgrades to the Planetarium's hardware, software and projection systems, make it the region's premier astronomy education facility with stunning new multimedia capabilities.

### **Relocation of Administration, Education and Facilities Departments**

In order to create the new spaces, we will build new administration offices on the second floor and relocate the Facilities Department.



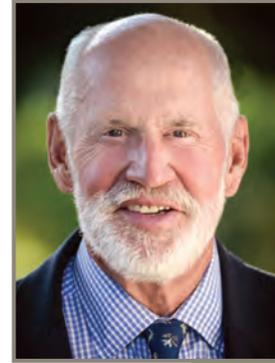
## Donor Profile

Campaign Cabinet member Bill Johnston and his wife Betsy are ardent supporters of education and see the South Florida Museum as an important adjunct to the formal education system. "This museum is a natural history museum 'plus,'" according to Betsy. "It brings different perspectives together and connects history, art, science and culture."

"While we primarily support colleges, anything you can do for young people to complement their formal education about how the world is connected is of major importance," says Bill. "Whether it's meteors and dinosaurs or math and science, knowing the connections is truly important."

A neighbor introduced Bill and Betsy to the South Florida Museum and they immediately saw the educational opportunities it offers. They are especially passionate about the *Pathways* Program included in the *Connect* Campaign. *Pathways* will bring new elements to both public programs and student field trips. Linking objects throughout the Museum allows for customization according to each person's interests. The program also provides a completely new tool for teachers to monitor and document student learning.

In addition to supporting educational causes, the Johnstons are proud donors to the Museum as a local "gem." Bill is a retired president of the New York Stock Exchange. He and Betsy have lived in Bradenton since 2004. "If you don't support where you live, why live there?" asks Bill.



Bill Johnston



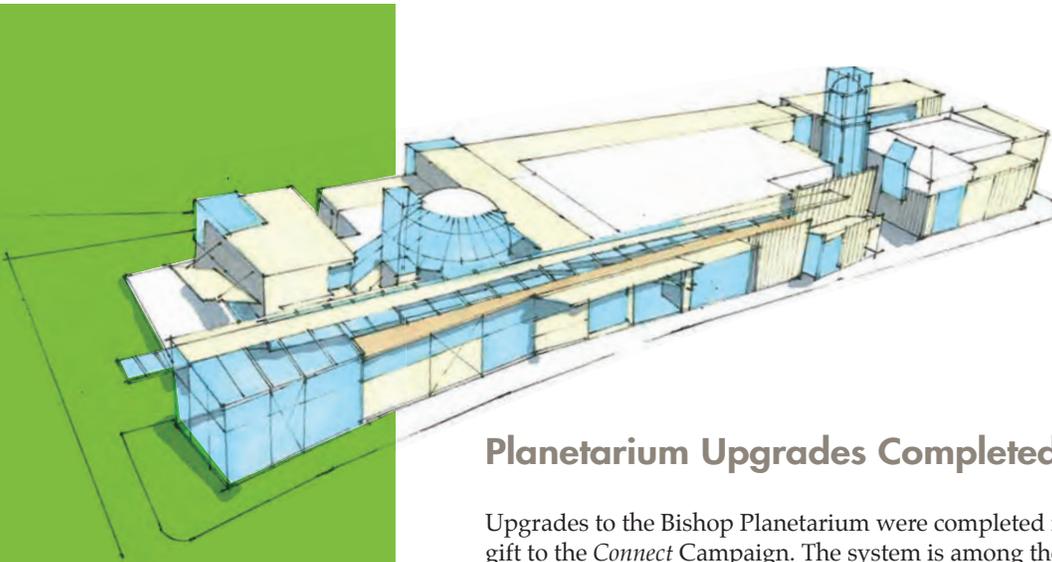
Betsy Johnston

## Campaign Cabinet

The Campaign Cabinet provides leadership to the *Connect* Campaign. Formed in 2013, the group is working diligently to secure the resources needed for the Museum to realize the Board's long-term vision. "We couldn't have come this far this fast without this incredible group," says Museum President Tom Breiter.



The Connect Campaign Cabinet, left to right: Lynn Lineman, Jackie Barron, Board President Tom Breiter, Campaign Chairman William "Bill" Blalock, Jeanie Kirkpatrick and William R. "Bill" Johnston.



## Planetarium Upgrades Completed Thanks to Early Gift

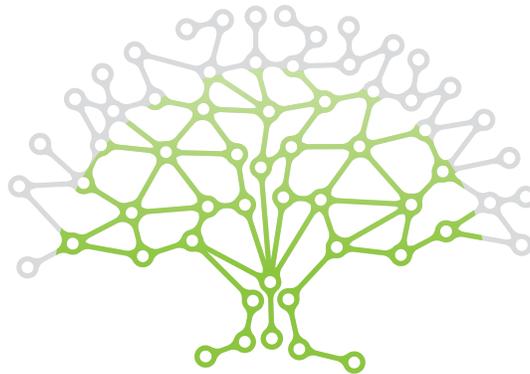
Upgrades to the Bishop Planetarium were completed in October 2013 thanks to an early gift to the *Connect* Campaign. The system is among the most advanced planetarium technologies in the world. The Bishop Planetarium is now a premier education facility in the region for astronomy and many science topics, as well as a multimedia theater for films, lectures, live music and digital art performances.

The system allows for exploration of Earth through the use of 200 continually updated satellite datasets of land, ocean, atmospheric and climate information and almost-live views of the entire planet. "There is also a digital, three-dimensional map of the entire universe," boasts Campaign Chair Blalock. "We can lift off from Earth and fly out of our solar system, out of our galaxy, and out to the very edge of the universe. We can also orbit Earth, using satellite data to observe and understand our planet in a whole new way. It's hard to imagine a more powerful set of tools for exploring the universe and our place in it." In addition to the new technology, several new shows have been added.

"The Planetarium upgrade was the perfect place to start," adds Blalock. "It is fundamental to the visitor experience, expands our educational opportunities, provides a major 'wow factor' and exemplifies our dynamic vision for the rest of the Museum. It sets the stage perfectly for what is ahead."

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### The *Connect* Campaign is 80% funded!

For information about the *Connect* Campaign, please contact Development Director Martha Wells at 941.746.4131, ext. 35 or [MWells@SouthFloridaMuseum.org](mailto:MWells@SouthFloridaMuseum.org).

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