



University of Memphis President Shirley Raines presents award to John Chando.

John Chando University of Memphis Distinguished Employee of the Year

When you visit the C.H. Nash Museum, the reason the landscaping looks so great, the air conditioning keeps our buildings cool in the summer, and our 40-year old buildings continue to operate so smoothly is the result of the outstanding performance of John Chando, our maintenance man extraordinaire. Over the past four years John has done a truly exceptional job in his role at the C.H. Nash Museum. This past month that performance was formally recognized. In June, John was one of three persons who received a Distinguished Employee of the Year award, chosen from among the 2500 employees of the University of Memphis.

John is truly one of the "behind the scenes" persons that makes the visitor experience at the C.H. Nash Museum a pleasant one. Join us as we all congratulate John on a job well done!



.from the Director

Earlier this year I wrote about our selection to participate in the prestigious Museum Assessment Program (MAP). Over the past four months our Museum staff conducted a self-study of our entire operation as part of the MAP process, administered through the American Association of Museums. During our study we reviewed everything from the visitor experience, the appearance of our museum, our programs, finances, and collections - in other words every aspect of our operation. The next step in the MAP process will take place later this month when Professor Redell Hearn, Founding Director of Museum Studies at Southern University of New Orleans, will visit the C.H. Nash Museum and interview our staff and community partners. She will then complete a report assessing how our Museum performs in terms of best practices for comparable institutions across the nation. This report will provide the basis for planning our direction in the coming years.

We are very pleased with the MAP project thus far. The self-study allowed us to probe and think about many aspects of our day-to-day operation that we sometimes take for granted or that have become overly routine. Our self-study also benefited from review by members of the Native American, University of Memphis, and broader Memphis communities. The MAP process has turned into a fantastic collaborative effort from the many individuals who are stakeholders in the C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa. Watch our newsletter for further information about the results and prospects from our participation in MAP.

As always please do not hesitate to contact me with your comments, suggestions or questions at rcnnolly@memphis.edu or 901-785-3160.

- Robert Connolly

Our Mission - As an integral component of the University of Memphis, the mission of the C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa is to protect and interpret the Chucalissa archaeological site for the benefit of the University community and the public, to provide high quality educational experiences on past and present Native American cultures of the Mid-South, and to pursue new knowledge of these cultures through research as part of the University's explicitly multicultural and multiethnic educational orientation.

African American Cultural Heritage in Southwest Memphis Exhibit

This summer, a group of nine Memphis high school students are creating a permanent exhibit for the C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa on the African American Cultural Heritage in Southwest Memphis. Some might wonder why is an African American cultural exhibit being installed in a museum known as an American Indian archaeological site? The answer is simple - the land on which American Indians lived hundreds of years ago was also the home of slaves and sharecroppers in the past 200 years, and today is a part of the predominately African American Southwest Memphis community. In fact, the modern “discovery” of the Chucalissa site occurred in the 1930s when the Jim Crow era segregated Shelby County Negro Park was under construction. The very genesis of the exhibit project was the desire to incorporate the artifacts and other data from a small 1920s era farmstead that was excavated from the Chucalissa site a few years ago.

Over a five-week period this summer, the students will participate in a wide-range of activities as they go about creating and installing the exhibit. They will visit area museums to see how exhibits are created. For example, at the National Civil Rights Museum the students learned about the care and preservation of artifacts and the very mechanics of exhibit creation. Recently, the students were given a tour and presentations on resources available at the McWhorter Library at the University of Memphis. The students also benefit from the special presentations from the faculty at the University of Memphis and community leaders. A portion of the project also consists of a writing and journaling program organized through WriteMemphis.

In the first two weeks of the program the students began to explore and discuss the focus and general content of the exhibit. In the remaining three weeks, the students will actually create the multi-media exhibit.

The student participants all live in Southwest Memphis and were selected from over 35 applicants who wrote an essay on “Why knowing about the African American cultural heritage in my neighborhood is important.” The project is organized through a partnership of the C.H. Nash Museum and the Westwood-Indian Neighborhood Development. Funding for the project is through the Strengthening Communities grant awards that are generously funded by The Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, the United Way of the Mid-South, and the University of Memphis Research Foundation. The Program is managed and administered by the School for Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Memphis.



Student Participants (back row) Tabatha Barlow, Erica Beasley; (middle row) Brian Bradley, Jasmine Morrison, Denzel Flenorl, Davarius Burton, Gerrod Allen; (front row) Angel Conway, Ashlee Banks.



Sam Gibbs (foreground) and Emily Schwimmer (background) lead a drumming circle with the students



Jasmine Morrison, Tabatha Barlow, and Davarius Burton discuss the exhibit project