

# PIONEERING HISTORY

THE MARCO ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

2021 | Vol. 28, No. 2



‘Under the Big Top’ | Cat Loan Extended | Marco Food Culture | Karen Brieger





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Cover image: The Marco Hotel (now the Olde Marco Inn & Suites). Courtesy of the State Archives of Florida.

Image (above): Garrett and Judy Smith at the 'Under the Big Top' gala at the Island Country Club on February 20, 2021.  
Photo by Rael Aguilar.

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



*Michael J. Rourke III*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Myrt Rose	Jory Westberry



Patricia Rutledge	<i>Exec. Director</i>
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Greetings to all of our members and friends.

During the past year we have faced the challenge of a global pandemic and responded with creativity and resilience. Our amazing volunteer members, talented staff, terrific partners at the Collier County Museum and dedicated board members have worked together to take the Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS) and Marco Island Historical Museum (MIHM) to new heights. As you read this newsletter, you will get a good sense of the excitement and momentum we are building every day!

Now we move forward into an exciting new future as we turn our focus towards three objectives. First, we are going to build the MIHS Endowment to create a strong sustainable long-term future for MIHS/MIHM. Second, we will complete the Marco Island Historical Museum by redesigning the entry/lobby area. Third, we will grow MIHS membership to share this amazing experience with more people.

Each of us can make a difference in preserving the incredible history of this area. Please take a moment and consider how you would like to contribute to helping the MIHS in these areas.

The MIHS and MIHM continue to generate an exciting energy for our community. This is a wonderful time to introduce new members to an amazing experience of the outstanding exhibits and interesting programs you already love. They will appreciate it and thank you for the introduction to the MIHS!

Your participation and continued support are critical to the success of the MIHS. We welcome members interested in volunteering their time and/or participating on MIHS committees. We need your help to preserve our history and add to this incredible community. You can make a difference through the MIHS!





Courtesy of the Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution (A240915).

# KEY MARCO CAT LOAN EXTENDED FIVE MORE YEARS

— PAULA ROBERTSON —

**A**fter traveling through time and space to return to its birthplace on Marco Island in Southwest Florida, the world-famous Key Marco Cat will remain at home for quite a while longer. Visitors to the Marco Island Historical Museum (MIHM) can now view the enigmatic feline through 2026.

An unprecedented five-year loan extension by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History continues the original 2019-2021 loan for another five years. This is the longest period of time that the Key Marco Cat has been on loan to any other institution ever.

The half cat/half human figure is considered one of the finest pieces of pre-Columbian Native American art ever discovered in North America. At just six inches tall, the wandering feline has captured the public's imagination for over a century. It continues to intrigue all who view it.

"The Key Marco Cat from the Smithsonian collections is an extraordinary object that attests to the unique archaeological record of Key Marco and the people and cultures who lived there for millennia," notes Torben Rick, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History.

Carved from native hardwood, the Key Marco Cat was created some 500 to 1,500 years ago by Southwest Florida's early Calusa people or their Muspa ancestors. For the first time since its discovery, it is reunited with other rare pre-Columbian artifacts discovered on Key Marco in 1896 during a Smithsonian sponsored archaeological expedition led by archaeologist and anthropologist Frank Hamilton Cushing. This expedition produced some of the greatest discoveries in the history of North American archaeology.

Because they were buried in an oxygen-free layer of muck, the rare wooden objects were astonishingly well preserved. Many began disintegrating upon exposure to the air. However, expedition artist Wells M. Sawyer recorded their original details and colors in field photographs and watercolors. Surviving artifacts and field recordings provide extraordinary insight into the lives of the Calusa Indians who dominated Florida's Southwest Coast and controlled South Florida when the Spanish arrived in the 16th century. Since their discovery, the returning Key Marco artifacts have been preserved by the Smithsonian and University of Pennsylvania (UPenn).

Meg Kassabaum, Assistant Curator for North America at UPenn's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, states that the Key Marco artifacts demonstrate the remarkable preservation of the organic materials from Key Marco. "Usually these materials do not preserve on ancient sites, so the Key Marco materials show us what we're missing from most other archaeological contexts. These particular artifacts are prime examples of the complex iconography used by pre-Columbian Floridians and probably had deep ritual significance to the people who created them. The fact that they have survived so long is truly incredible and provides a nearly unique window into the past."

"The Key Marco Artifacts exhibit is the culmination of a 25-year vision on the part of the Marco Island Historical Society to bring these incredibly important artifacts back to Marco Island in order to educate and inspire people of all ages about the fascinating history of our region," says MIHS Curator of Collections Austin Bell. "It has taken years of planning and discussions with the lending institutions and the continuation of a public-private partnership that includes the Marco Island Historical Society, Collier County and the community."



# MIHS LAUNCHES \$5 MILLION ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

PAULA ROBERTSON

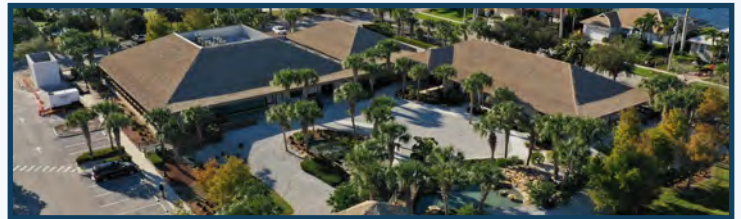
Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS) Executive Director Pat Rutledge announced the official kick off of a \$5 million endowment campaign for MIHS at a gathering of friends on April 9. In her remarks to the group, Rutledge shared that the evening was about honoring the past, celebrating the accomplishments of the present and, most importantly, looking toward the exciting future of MIHS.

She pointed out why the endowment campaign is so important to ensure the future of MIHS and the Marco Island Historical Museum (MIHM). “Especially now, when many historical societies and museums have closed their doors never to reopen as a result of the pandemic, we realized that we are very vulnerable without an endowment,” said Rutledge. “A healthy endowment fund will ensure our future. History doesn’t belong just to us. It belongs to the future. Following behind us are generations who will want to know the stories that went before. We can’t let those stories disappear.”

Rutledge also shared some major MIHS accomplishments over the 27 years since its founding. MIHS initially raised the funds to build the new Museum that celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. MIHS opened four permanent exhibits in just four years, and MIHM twice received the highest recognition in the Florida museum system, the Museum of Excellence Award from the Florida Association of Museums. With the support of MIHS, three books on Marco Island history have been published, including Curator of Collections Austin Bell’s newest book, *The Nine Lives of Florida’s Famous Key Marco Cat*. The MIHS’s long-time quest to bring back the Key Marco Cat to Marco Island was realized in 2019 when the Smithsonian Institution agreed to a three-year loan that now, through the work of

MIHS and MIHM has been extended by five more years through 2026.

The MIHS endowment campaign is led by MIHS Board Member Tish Champagne and committee members Rosemary Albanese, Tom Britten, Bruce Graev, Carolyn Henderson and Pat Rutledge. A match challenge Legacy Gift of \$100,000 has been issued by MIHS Board Member Myrt Rose and matched by Tish and Rene Champagne. Others are invited to meet the challenge or to make their own match challenges in varying amounts.



Donors of \$10,000 or more to the endowment campaign become members of the prestigious MIHS Cushing Society that honors Frank Hamilton Cushing, leader of the 1896 Marco Island archaeological dig that revealed the Key Marco Cat and other pre-Columbian artifacts — one of the most important finds of pre-Columbian artifacts in North America.

“A successful endowment campaign will ensure that the Marco Island Historical Society will have the financial foundation necessary to continue to maintain and exhibit the extensive MIHS collections that encompass more than 40,000 objects; to bring in important loaned exhibits; and to preserve, present and keep alive the fascinating history of Marco Island for current and future generations,” notes Rutledge.

To learn how you can support the MIHS endowment campaign, contact Pat Rutledge at (239) 389-6447 or [exec@themih.org](mailto:exec@themih.org).



MIHS Endowment Campaign committee members Myrt Rose, Pat Rutledge and Committee Chairman Tish Champagne. Photo by Rael Aguilar.



# 'UNDER THE BIG TOP'

Island Country Club, Marco Island, FL

February 20, 2021

Photos by Rael Aguilar









# A CELEBRATION OF MARCO'S FOOD CULTURE

REBECCA MAZEROSKI

In early April, the Marco Island Historical Museum opened its latest exhibit: *Fish, Fruit, and Fine Dining: Marco Island's Food Culture*. The exhibit celebrates the unique history and variety of Marco Island's amazing food culture and how it is experienced today in the Island's many dining establishments. Marco Island's long history of human habitation has a lot to do with its prime location and great soil. Ready access to fresh seafood, game, and the ability to grow fruits and vegetables have appealed to several cultures.

Evidence of archaic Indian and Muspa cultures abound in the Ten Thousand Islands region, but more distinct information about the Calusa and their dietary habits have been documented here on Marco Island. This is supported by the records of Spanish explorers who noted a highly stratified culture which subsisted on a seafood diet with very little agriculture. Rather the Calusa gathered local plants. Frank Hamilton Cushing's 1896 archaeological dig at the north end of Marco Island provided the physical proof of what the Spanish recorded. Netting, cucurbits, and shells with neatly pierced holes painted a vivid picture of seine haul fishing practices, for instance.

Fishing remains the theme throughout Marco Island's history. Marco Island was abandoned by the Calusa at least 500 years ago, prior to Spanish exploration of the area. It was resettled in the 1870s by Americans seeking a homesteading lifestyle. Like the Calusa, they were attracted by the abundant sea life and availability of wild game. The areas' clam beds sustained two clam factories: Doxsee Clam Factory and the Burham Clam Factory. Families like the Barfields, Colliers, and Olds quickly learned the soil could sustain plenty of fruits and vegetables. When it came to citrus fruits, like pineapples, mangoes, and oranges, it wasn't long before excess fruit was being shipped

out of Marco Island to meet the rest of the country's voracious appetite. For a short while, the area sustained two pineapple plantations – Frederick Ludlow's and Captain Horr's.

Today, Marco Island is a world-famous vacation and retirement destination offering nearly every type of food style and dining establishment imaginable. Fishing is still the past-time of many Islanders, assisted by the 100 miles of canals dug by the Deltona Corporation. To learn more about the people and practices that have defined Marco Island's food culture, come see the exhibit in the Sandlin Gallery. *Fish, Fruit, and Fine Dining: Marco Island's Food Culture* is open to the public April 6 through July 10, 2021.



Orida Olds holding a brace of ducks she shot. Photo by Saloma Olds (MIHS # 2011-04-157). Gift of Martha Olds Adams.



Horr's Island. The pineapple packing plant is on the right. Courtesy of Collier County Museums (CCM # 97.14.1).





# Fish, Fruit, AND Fine Dining

Marco Island's Food Culture

APRIL 6 ~ JULY 10

MARCO  
ISLAND  
HISTORICAL MUSEUM

180 SOUTH HEATHWOOD DRIVE  
MARCO ISLAND, FLORIDA



colliermuseums.com

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# MIHS RECEIVES COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT

*Paula Robertson*

**M**arco Island Historical Society (MIHS) has received a generous grant of \$10,000 from the Marco Island Community Fund of the Community Foundation of Collier County. The grant will provide funds for directional signage and interpretive panels for the Marco Island Historical Museum campus to enhance the visitor experience.



**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
OF COLLIER COUNTY**  
*FOR GOOD. FOREVER.*

According to MIHS Executive Director Pat Rutledge, "With the help of the Marco Island Fund of the Community Foundation of Collier County, visitors to the Marco Island Historical Museum not only will have an easier time navigating the campus, they also will be better informed about our extensive outdoor exhibits. We are deeply grateful for this support."

The Marco Island Fund of The Community Foundation of Collier County provides support to organizations significantly serving Marco Island. The Community Foundation of Collier County, now in its 35th year, is a tax-exempt, public, charitable organization established in 1985 to increase and focus on local private philanthropy. Today, the Community Foundation of Collier County manages more than 750 funds, collaborates with hundreds of nonprofits, holds \$260 million in assets and has distributed over \$200 million in grants to nonprofit organizations and community programs. The Community Foundation of Collier County is one of Florida's fastest-growing community foundations.

VISIT OUR  
**MUSEUM GIFT SHOP**

Stop in and shop our wide selection of books,  
unique jewelry, work by local artists and artisans  
and Marco Island gifts of all kinds.

When you shop in our gift shop, you are contributing to the Marco  
Island Historical Society in our mission to preserve and share the  
history and heritage of Marco Island and the surrounding community  
while also supporting the Marco Island Historical Museum



**Summer Hours**  
**Tuesday - Saturday**  
**11am - 3pm**



**MIHS**  
Marco Island Historical Society



# SKIFF CONSERVATION EXTENDED THRU MAY

*Paula Robertson*

The Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS) announces that a “living exhibit” featuring the onsite conservation of a unique, hand-crafted 1940s wooden skiff is extended through May at the Marco Island Historical Museum (MIHM). Every Tuesday from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., museum visitors can watch Master Boat Builder Roger Johnson and Ron Rutledge, who are donating their time to the project, as they work on what has been called the masterpiece of its maker Eugene Paul Teachout. The skiff also can be viewed during museum hours.

The skiff conservation is being sponsored by donors Vicki and Neil Bretthauer who have made a \$20,000 contribution to fund the project that ultimately will become a permanent exhibit at MIHM. “The skiff is an important component of the Marco Island Historical Society’s plans for a reimagined museum lobby,” notes MIHS Executive Director Pat Rutledge. “We are so grateful to the Bretthauers for this generous inaugural donation towards these plans. The museum lobby provides an important first opportunity for our visitors to begin to engage with the rich history of Marco Island, and sets the tone for all that they will see and experience inside.”



Neil and Vicki Bretthauer.

Until being acquired by MIHS in January, the little skiff resided at the Museum of Florida History (MFH) in Tallahassee. Curator of Collections Austin Bell personally brought the skiff back to Marco Island. “This little skiff is a part of Marco Island history and it belongs here. We are grateful to the staff at MFH who made it happen,” states Bell.

Teachout was a printer and World War I-era veteran who became a recluse and lived near Goodland, Florida on a mudflat surrounded by mangrove trees. He used the 11-foot skiff — likely built using cypress, mahogany and red mangrove — for more than 20 years for transportation and fishing in the backwater islands around Marco Island. He designed and built the little boat using almost primitive, possibly 18th century, tools. Instead of using nails to hold the skiff’s hull together, Teachout laboriously whittled the boat’s fastenings of wooden pegs one by one. The boat has a small live-well for storing bait and an ingenious folding seat that allows the operator to row facing forward. A bulbous midsection adds to its stability and provides flotation support needed for a boat so small.

Teachout was discovered and befriended by Bud Kirk and his wife Kappy of Goodland. Known for helping those in need, the Kirks invited the shy hermit to live in a crab shack where Kirk made crab traps. Teachout called the crab shack home until he passed away in 1968. According to early comments by Kirk, the quiet craftsman was wonderful with wood and often did carpentry jobs around the little village of Goodland, but he described his boat as his masterpiece. The skiff’s intriguing story now continues at MIHM where the story of Eugene Paul Teachout, a recluse and craftsman who lived alone in the backwaters of Marco Island, will continue to be told for generations to come.



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# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

## KAREN BRIEGER

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*How well do you know the people behind the friendly faces of the Museum? In honor of our amazing group of volunteers, the MIHS is launching a series of interviews spotlighting one of the many whose dedication and efforts are vital to this institution.*

*This month's featured volunteer is docent, tour guide, and gift shop veteran Karen Brieger. Karen provided 216.25 volunteer hours last year, the highest out of all our volunteers for 2020.*

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When did you start volunteering at the MIHS?

I started volunteering about 10 years ago.

How or why did you get involved?

I saw a small classified ad in the paper asking for people to volunteer at the museum. I walked in and talked with the manager, Lisa Marciano, and the rest is history!

What is it that you love most about volunteering here?

I love volunteering here because of all the others that work and volunteer here. Plus, I enjoy the opportunity to meet so many visitors from many U.S. states and countries around the world.

How long have you lived on Marco Island?

I have lived on the island since 2010.

What brought you here for the first time?

My oldest brother bought a lot in 1968 and built on the island. I visited often to enjoy

the beaches. Driving over the Jolley Bridge just made my stress disappear.

What is your favorite story or moment from volunteering?

I have so many favorite moments, but one was watching the Calusa Village being constructed. I remember when they were building the Tiki huts and bringing that room to life.

What is your favorite object or item in the Museum?

I can't name just one object or item, but I think my favorite room is "Paradise Found." It is so well done and tells so much history.

What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is probably seafood. I love ordering the salmon from Marek's.

What is your favorite color?

Blue.

What is your favorite animal?

I previously owned a dachshund, Sadie, for 15 years. She was a favorite.





Karen Brieger. Photo by Heather Otis.

**Favorite place or thing to do on Marco Island?**

Besides the museum, walking at Mackle Park and Residents' Beach.

**What are your hobbies outside of volunteering at the Museum?**

I love walking and reading good mysteries, spy novels, or historical fiction. *Spymaster* by Brad Thor was my latest read.

**What is one thing people might not know about you?**

Hopefully a number of things.



Susan Pernini and Karen Brieger. Photo by Heather Otis.

**If you were to improve the museum in some way, what would you do?**

I always want the museum to be a viable part of the community, so I think it's important to attract young people willing to share the love of Marco's history with all for years to come.



# NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

JANUARY - APRIL 2021

## Single Membership

Maria Bachich  
Austin Bell  
Caitlin Benarroch\*  
Dolores Burton  
Evelyn Case  
Susan Child  
Karen Chopra\*  
Nancy Healy  
Beverly Heeter

Robert Karas  
Susan Kenning  
Rebecca Krisko  
Catherine Levert  
Eva Lindgren  
Bertha McDaniel  
Catherine Mendygraw  
Barbara Mieras  
Colleen Mulchrone\*

Heather Otis\*  
Laura Owen  
Barbara Perez\*  
Peggy Polson  
Virginia Read  
Joyce Reynolds  
Kathleen Reynolds  
Jan Temkiewicz\*  
Mary Alice Wilson

## Family Membership

John Abbey & Mindy Star  
Sumner & Carolyn Atkins  
Kenneth & Valinda Bilbrey  
Wes & Karen Blackwell  
Andrew Blott  
Hildy Bowbeer  
Bill Brockett  
Tim Burfield & LuAnn  
Schieferdecker  
Bill & Ellen Camm  
Charles & Margaret Carswell  
Edwin & Cynthia Cohen  
Tim & Cindy Colligan\*  
Ed & Cindy Crane  
Bruce & Allie Delventhal  
Nancy Devon  
Linda & Martin Duhms\*  
Doug & Brenda Feller

Dick & Nancy Gady  
Timothy & Catherine Gorman  
David & Connie Green  
Ned & Dolores Gruca  
Don & Carolyn Henderson  
Jerry & Gingie Holzgrafe  
Claire & Marjorie Johnson  
Thomas & Victoria Johnson  
Dr. Dennis & Theresa Kelly  
Franklin & Patricia Lacy  
Meredith Letham  
Michael & Linda Levine  
Debra & Roger Levos  
Joe & Joan Lipic  
William & Julia Maslanka\*  
Steven & Theresa Morgan  
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Tom & Carol Pepin  
Mike & Kathy Peppe  
R. David & Kelly Ponder  
Michael & Elisabeth Rehtin  
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Alan & Sarah Tipka  
Mark & Mary Beth Tobin  
Jim & Sue Vandenberg  
Gary & Anne Vanic  
Bill & Susan Volp  
Janet Watson  
Paul & Jory Westberry

\*New Member



# NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

JANUARY - APRIL 2021

## Patron Membership (\$250)

William & Rosemary Albanese  
David & Kathy Caruso  
Craig & Kathy Fenton  
Douglas & Barbara Johnston  
Francine & Golden Albert Klein  
Joe & Hope Mena

Gail Merenyi  
Charlette Roman  
Ron & Pat Rutledge  
Cherry Smith  
Garrett & Judy Smith  
Jay & Ricki Terzis

## Benefactor Membership (\$500)

Linda Cassens  
Michael & Carolee Levison  
Little Bar Restaurant (Ray Bozicnik)  
Aldo & Mary Pat Palombo  
Jim & Allyson Richards

## Tommie Barfield Circle<sup>1</sup> (\$1,000)

Shirlee Barcic  
Ann & Heyward Boyce  
Neil & Vicki Bretthauer  
Rene & Tish Champagne  
Doug & Margaret DeCamp  
Dave & Ellie Everitt  
Bruce Graev  
Peter & Darcie Guerin

Douglas & Barbara Johnston  
Lael Kilpatrick &  
Warren Williamson\*  
Jean King  
Sonja Laidig  
John & Brenda McGlade\*  
Shiva Neyestani  
Jeffrey Lutz & M. Cathy  
Nowosielski

Doug Peterson &  
Susan Tan Chang\*  
Jim & Allyson Richards  
Myrt Rose  
Alan & Linda Sandlin  
Preston & Keely Stiner  
Chris Sullivan  
Paul Tateo

<sup>1</sup>Active Members

\*New Member



Artwork by Malenda Trick.



# BECOME A MEMBER

Since 1994, the Marco Island Historical Society has been preserving and sharing the history and heritage of our community. Join us as we make history!

## *Single (\$75 per year)*

- Free Entry to our MIHS Lectures & Exhibit Openings
- Free or Discounted Admission for Other Special Programs
- 10% Member Discount in Museum Gift Shop (Excludes Consignment Items)
- Invitations to Exclusive Member Only Events
- Email Notification of Upcoming Events and Exhibits

## *Family (\$125 per year)*

- All the Benefits of Single Membership for Two Adults plus Children and Grandchildren (18 and under)

For a Limited Time, All Membership Levels include NARM (North American Reciprocal Museum) Program.

## *Patron (\$250 per year)*

- All the Benefits of Family Membership
- Listing as Patron on Website & Newsletter
- Invitations to Sustaining Membership Events
- Private Collections Tour with MIHS Staff (Up to 6 people)

## *Benefactor (\$500 per year)*

- All the Benefits of Patron Membership
- Listing as Benefactor on Website & Newsletter
- Complimentary One-Year Family Membership to Gift to a Friend or Family Member

## *Tommie Barfield Circle (\$1,000 per year)*

- All the Benefits of Benefactor Membership
- Listing in the Tommie Barfield Circle on Website & Newsletter
- Exclusive Invitations to Exhibit Previews & Receptions

## Yes! I/We Want to Make History & Join the MIHS!

### LEVEL OF MEMBERSHIP

- ☐ \$75 Single      ☐ \$250 Patron  
☐ \$125 Family      ☐ \$500 Benefactor  
                                 ☐ \$1,000 Tommie Barfield Circle

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

- ☐ My/Our Check Made Payable to the MIHS is Enclosed  
☐ Charge My/Our Membership to: ☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ DISC

CARDHOLDER NAME

CREDIT CARD NO.

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CVC

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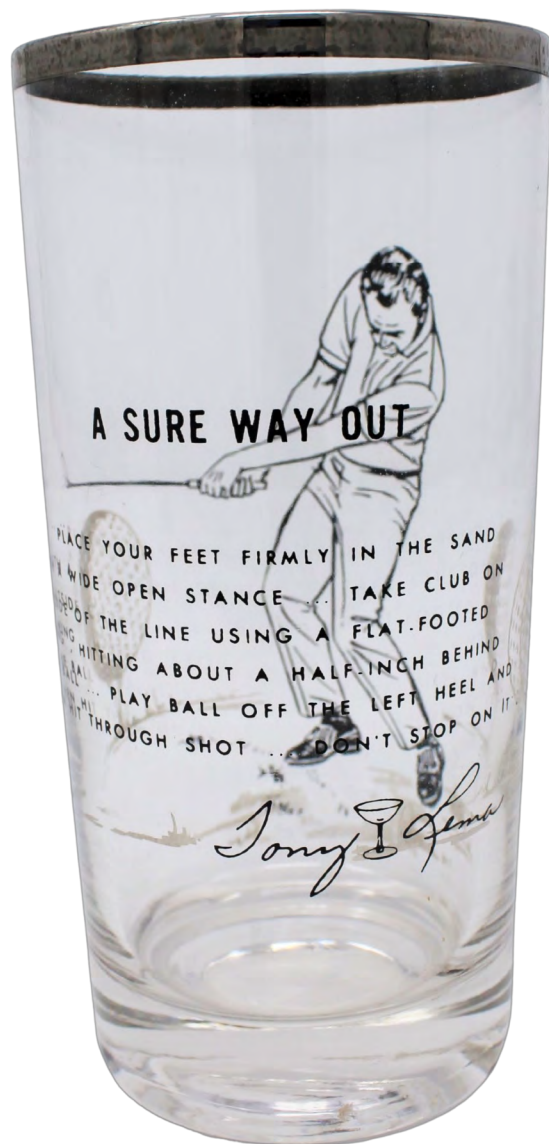
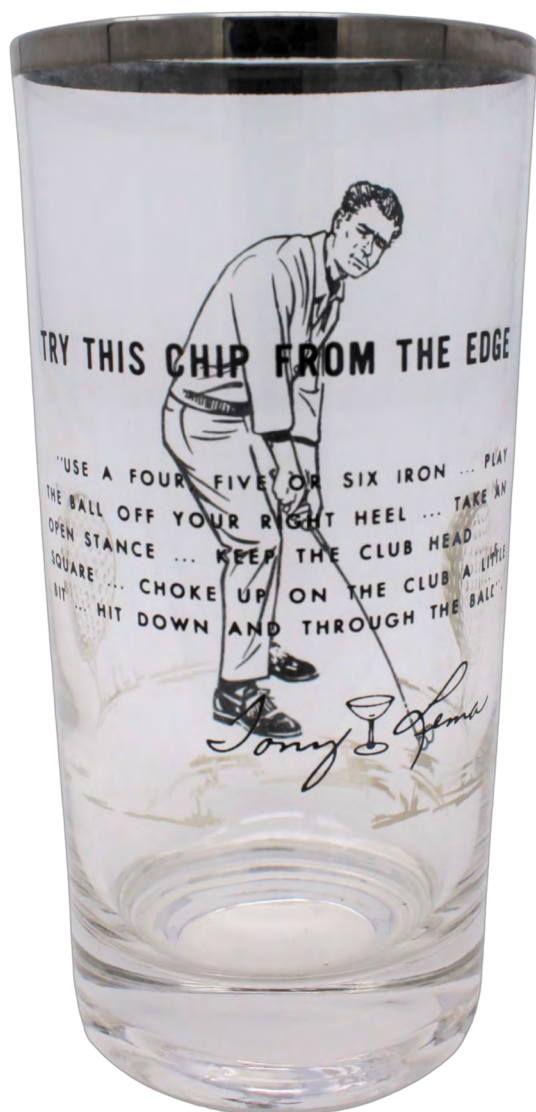
EMAIL

Thank You For Your Support!



# COLLECTIONS CORNER

Thanks to your generous support, the MIHS works every day to preserve and share the more than 40,000 items in its collections. Each issue, we will feature a new item from the collections.



Tumblers, glass

Official Tony Lema Glasses (Set of 8)

c. 1960

Gift of Marc Ackerman

MIHS 2016-65-002C, 2016-65-002E



# NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

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