



# City Council Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: APRIL 8, 2025

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT      WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: APPROVE ACCESSION INTO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF ONE (1) CULTURAL OBJECT FROM A REGIONAL TRIBAL ARTIST AND THREE (3) ARCHIVAL ITEMS FROM A LOCAL DONOR

## **ISSUE:**

Approve accession into the permanent collection of one (1) cultural object from a regional tribal artist and three (3) archival items from a local donor.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of one (1) cultural object from a regional tribal artist and three (3) archival items from a local donor.

## **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

At a special meeting on December 4, 2024, the Museum of Riverside Board, with seven (7) members present for this vote and two (2) absent, unanimously voted to recommend that City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of one (1) cultural object from a regional tribal artist and three (3) archival items from a local donor.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **OBJECT FROM REGIONAL TRIBAL ARTIST:**

During planning for the Museum of Riverside's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, staff determined to commission new work from artists and/or culture bearers representing the four tribal groups mentioned in the Museum's land acknowledgement statement, which appears below:

The Museum of Riverside is grateful to stand on the traditional and ancestral lands of the Cahuilla, Gabrielino-Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano peoples. The Cahuilla, Gabrielino-Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano continue to live and thrive in Southern California.

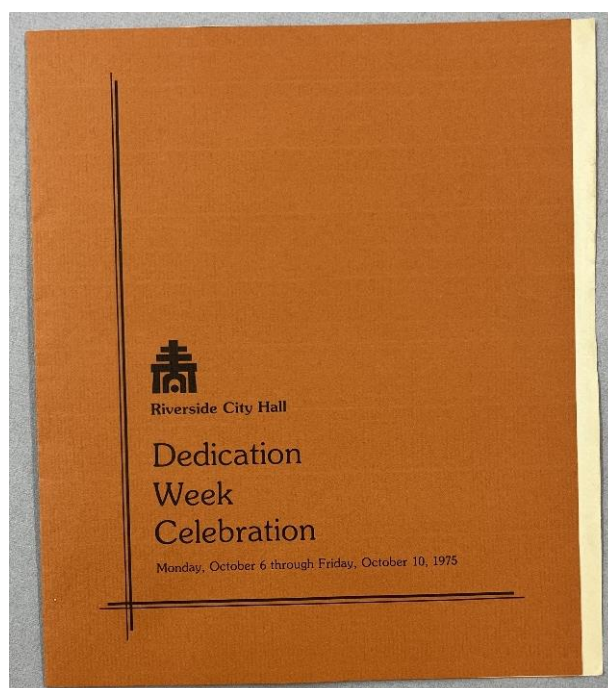
Three objects and one set of songs were the result of this effort to commission new creative work. The present recommendation is in regard to one of the objects.

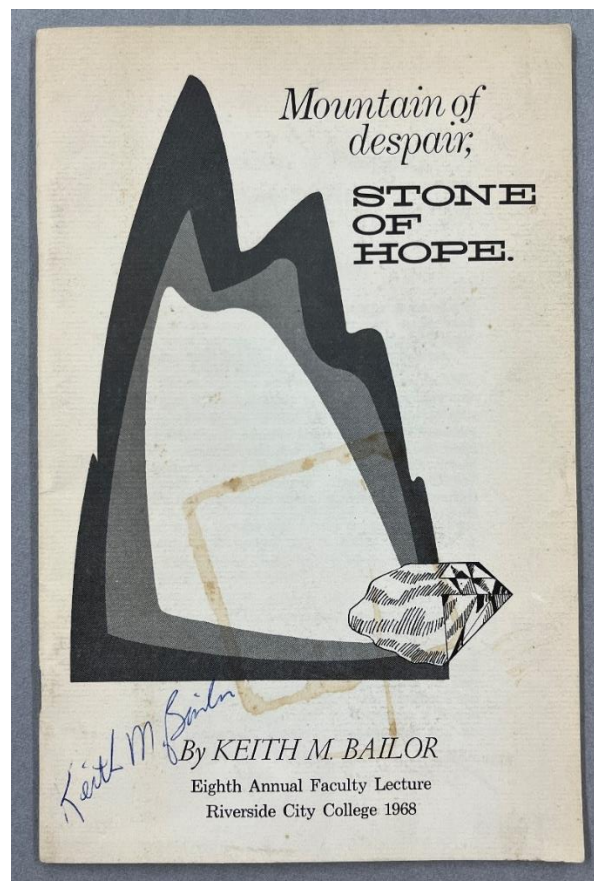
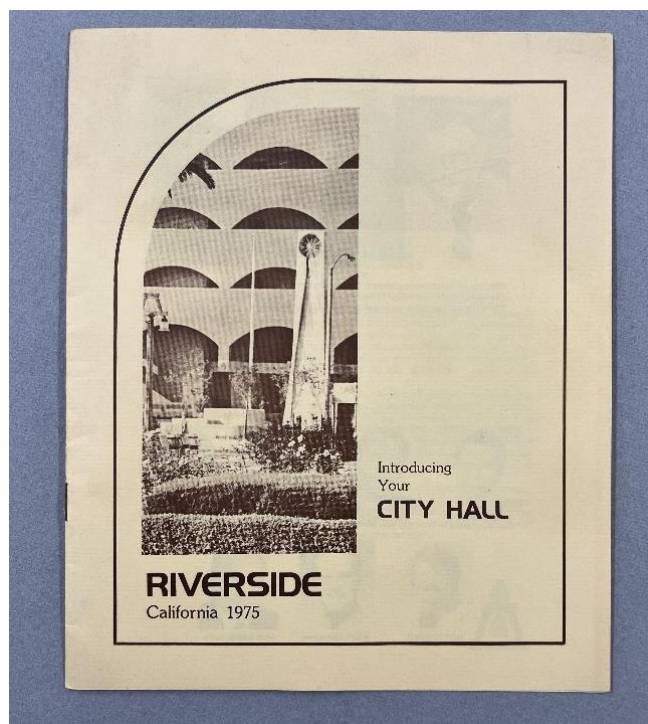


#### ARCHIVAL ITEMS:

Three publications were donated by the daughter of Forrest Carl Fowler who worked at the Mission Inn and then at the Museum of Riverside for several years, retiring in 1984. Mr. Fowler also volunteered at Heritage House.

The items are local publications as follows: *Riverside City Hall Dedication Week Celebration* (1975), *Introducing Your City Hall Riverside California 1975*, and *Mountain of Despair, Stone of Hope* by Keith M. Bailor, published by RCC (1968). The two documents from 1975 stem from the opening of Riverside's current City Hall building, including the schedule of events for the week-long celebration of the City Hall dedication. The *Mountain of Despair, Stone of Hope* publication by Keith M. Bailor was published by RCC for their Eighth Annual Faculty Lecture in 1968. The cover is signed by the author. This publication includes discussion of adding Latin American history courses and African studies at RCC.





## **DISCUSSION:**

To “accession” an object is the process of including it formally in a museum’s permanent collection, which is the category of collection for which the greatest effort will be made to preserve the object in perpetuity and document it fully.

The Museum of Riverside’s Collections Development Plan explicitly notes that the “Museum will not collect fine art, fine craft, or decorative art primarily for aesthetic reasons.” However, the Museum collects art for reasons that may be identified as historic or cultural. It also notes goals regarding the Indigenous collections and resources, stating that the “Museum must establish a continuum from the early collections to the contemporary era to reinforce the reality that Indigenous cultures are living cultures.” In the present, continuity of culture is often expressed through art objects.

Cahuilla artist Rose Ann Hamilton’s basket hat of deer grass, juncus, and willow has a story unique to the Museum of Riverside, which is detailed in the attached report to the Museum of Riverside Board. The basket hat woven by Rose Ann Hamilton was exhibited for the first time in the exhibition *Dear Riverside: A Letter to Our First Love*, on view from July 25, 2024, through January 5, 2025, at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties. A video of Hamilton collecting materials and reflecting on the basket-making tradition was part of the *Dear Riverside* exhibition and is now part of the record for this object.

The archival items support the Museum’s effort to enrich holdings relating to local history. Recommendations regarding accessions to the permanent collection are guided by the Museum’s Collections Development Plan. In this plan, the Museum identifies target areas for growth, including local institutional histories. The plan notes that “Through its collections, the Museum will work to broaden the inquiry into the ways in which material culture defines a shared understanding of history, place, and identity.”

## **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority, “Arts, Culture and Recreation” and in particular goal 1.1 (strengthening Riverside’s portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), goal 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and goal 1.5 (supporting programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the community).

Museum programs further support the Strategic Priority, “Community Well-Being.” Specific goals supported by Museum programs and partnerships include goal 2.3, which includes strengthening neighborhood identities, and goal 2.5, which points to fostering relationships between community members and partner organizations.

1. **Community Trust** – The Museum’s Collections Committee is composed of Museum staff, Museum Board members, and members of the Riverside community. Strengthening the Museum’s collections in accordance with the Museum’s Collection Development Plan and with the involvement of community members builds community trust and supports the Museum’s mission.
2. **Equity** – New collection resources enrich the stories that the Museum can tell across all

neighborhoods through exhibitions and programs that are offered equitably. Acquisition of work by living Indigenous artists and artisans reinforces the awareness that these cultures thrive in our community today.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – These proposed new accessions came to the Museum by donation or budgeted purchase costs and pose manageable demands on current storage and recordkeeping resources.
4. **Innovation** – New accessions into the Museum’s permanent collection expand the diversity and flexibility of collection resources, enabling more programming options.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Strengthening the Museum’s collections in accordance with the Museum’s Collection Development Plan, collection management policies, and mission enhances the City’s ability to preserve Riverside’s history for the future in a considered and judicious manner.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
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Certified as to availability of funds:	Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by:	Mike Futrell, City Manager
Approved as to form:	Jack Liu, Interim City Attorney

Attachments: Museum of Riverside Board Minutes – December 4, 2024