

Robert B. Fuhrman
3316 N. 19th Street
Superior, WI 54880

July 23, 2014

Chair, Museum Director Search Committee
College of Arts and Sciences – Dean's Office
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Box 1608
Edwardsville, IL 62026-1608

Dear Museum Director Search Committee,

I am pleased to submit this letter and accompanying resume and references for consideration related to SIUE's search for a Museum Director.

Throughout twenty-six years in the museum field I have had the opportunity to work with a variety of collection types (historical [2- and 3-dimensional], fine arts, and ethnological) at various sized institutions. While my several years working in county historical societies may seem limiting to some, I feel that this experience, along with the eight years in my present position, has made me a strong generalist in the field.

The position as described in your posting appeals to me in terms of the diversity of collections and the integration of exhibits into the fabric of the university and community-taking the museum outside of its walls. I feel that I have had success throughout my career in many of the facets that the job posting details and would appreciate an opportunity to explore the position further as I feel much of my experience is relevant to this directorship.

Thank you for your attention to this communication and for taking my application into consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Fuhrman

Robert B. Fuhrman
3316 N. 19th Street
Superior, WI 54880
(715) 392-1273
fuhrman@bvhcenter.org

RESUME

Education

Bachelor of Science, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, majors in History and Sociology, 1982.

Master of Arts in Public History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1988.

Certification in Museum Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee & Milwaukee Public Museum, 1989.

Employment

Assistant Curator of Research Collections, Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1988-1990. Duties-arranging and processing archival collections, assisting on-site research patrons, responding to mailed inquiries, exhibition research, composing exhibit labels, processing of new accessions, microfilming, and public programs representing the Historical Society.

Executive Director, Mercer County Historical Society, Mercer, Pennsylvania, 1990-1997. Duties-responsible for all operations of the Historical Society including seven buildings (5 historic structures), a local history research library, all museum operations, public programming, newsletter editorship, preparation and oversight of the annual budget, governmental relations (county government, state legislators), staff supervision, intern supervision, volunteer recruitment and supervision, fund-raising, grant writing, exhibition research, design, fabrication and installation and contractor relations. As the Society's first professionally trained staff person I instituted a collections management program including preventative conservation measures and the design of all pertinent forms and procedures.

Executive Director, Kenosha County Historical Society, Kenosha, Wisconsin, 1997-2002. Duties-responsible for all operations of the Historical Society including museum galleries, local history research library, public programs, newsletter editorship, preparation and oversight of annual budget, marketing, governmental relations (county and city government), staff supervision (2 full-time, 2 part-time), fund-raising, grant writing, support for board committees, exhibition research, design, fabrication and installation. During my tenure the Society transitioned from an historic house museum operation to a newly-renovated 12,500 square foot museum facility (located in a decommissioned water-treatment facility) and expanded its exhibition and collections program to include locally-manufactured Nash and American Motors Corporation automobiles. I served as the Society's representative in this cooperative building project (working with the City of Kenosha, the State of Wisconsin and automotive history enthusiasts).

Chief Executive Officer, Clark County Historical Society, Springfield, Ohio, 2002-2006. Duties-responsible for all operations of the Historical Society including the 65,000 square foot Heritage Center of Clark County which included museum galleries, local history research library, museum store, public programming spaces and leased spaces. Administrative duties included preparation and oversight of annual budget, supervision of staff (8 full-time, 3 part-time), newsletter editorship, public presentations, governmental relations (county, city, state and federal legislators), fund-raising and donor relations, revenue development, support for board committees, supervision of exhibition program, public relations, public programs and marketing. During my tenure I:

- Oversaw the completion of Phase II of the Heritage Center Project, an 8500 square foot exhibition hall addition (\$2.5 million).
- Conceived, planned and completed Phase III of the Heritage Center Project, a \$1 million project consisting of building envelope improvements, creation of collections storage space and various sundry capital improvements.
- Coordinated a twelve-thousand person presidential campaign rally on the Center's grounds; worked with Federal and local security agencies as well as campaign staff.
- Created an accounting manual.
- Assisted the Board of Trustees through the strategic planning process.

Executive Director Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center, Superior, Wisconsin, 2006-present.

Duties-responsible for all operations of the Center, a 22,000 square foot facility including exhibition galleries, museum store, rental spaces and collections storage. Administrative duties include preparation and oversight of annual budget, supervision of staff, newsletter editorship, public presentations, governmental relations (county, city, state and federal legislators), fund-raising and donor relations, revenue development, support for board committees, supervision of exhibition program, public relations, public programs and marketing. During my tenure I:

- Helped guide the organization through the expansion of its mission from that of a strictly World War II heritage center to one that collects US military history from World War II forward with special emphasis on the Veteran's experience.
- Oversaw the creation of a new web site to reflect that expanded mission.
- Identified and arranged public programs for the Center including lectures, author's presentations and book signings, veterans' presentations and concerts.
- Researched and directed the creation of several exhibits.
- Raised the public profile of the Center through: on and off-site public programming; initiating participation in Superior's 4th of July Parade; non-profit sponsorship of the Duluth Air Show; teaching classes for the University of Minnesota-Duluth University for Seniors program, teaching WWII history classes for Wisconsin Indianhead Technical Institute's Continuing Education Dept., development of two new events for the Center (Community Open House and Military Vehicle Show both starting in 2011), development of the Center's first fund-raising calendar (2012) and, development of the Center's on-line marketing (primarily through email blasts, social media and our new e-newsletter launched in 2012).
- Worked with board committee to grow annual fund-raising auction event (app. \$55,770 net income in 2013).
- Worked with board on fund raising for boiler and HVAC upgrades (\$72,000) in 2013.

- Worked with grant developer and staff on grant applications to local funding sources and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Successful grants in the last three years include funding for the Educator's position, exhibit support, lobby communications center and miscellaneous equipment.
- Worked with board to successfully solicit City support for the Center through local hotel/motel tax revenue, 2012.

Publications

Editor, Mercer County Historical Society newsletter, 1990-1997.

Author, *Hail Temple Built to Justice: A History of Mercer County's Courthouses*, 1996.

Author, "The 57th Pennsylvania at Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Magazine*, No. 17, 1997.

Editor, Kenosha County Historical Society newsletter *Southport*, 1997-2002.

Editor, Clark County Historical Society newsletter *Chronicles*, 2002-2006.

Editor, *Bong Flyer*, newsletter of the Bong Veterans Historical Center, 2006-2010.

Managing Editor of *Bong Frequent Flyer* e-newsletter, 2010-present.

Author, "Bong Center Expands Military Display," *Supply Line Magazine*, June/July 2011.

Author, "Veterans Historical Center Changes and Expands," *Forward in Flight* magazine, summer 2014.

Miscellaneous

- Member, Mercer County Courthouse Restoration Committee, 1992-1997.
- Grant reviewer, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1996.
- History Day Judge, Greenville Area Schools, Greenville, PA, 1995-96.
- Commissioner (1997-2002), Kenosha City Historic Preservation Commission (Chair 2001-02).
- Grant reviewer, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, 2002.
- Graduate Clark County Leadership Program, 2003.
- Member, Holiday in the City event committee, Springfield, Ohio, 2002-06
- Trustee, Wescott House Foundation (Frank Lloyd Wright property, Springfield, Ohio), 2003-06, vice-president 2004-06.
- Member, Springfield City Schools Alumni Awards Committee, 2005-06
- Member Center City Statue Advisory Committee, 2005-06
- Member, Rotary, 2002-present; Springfield, Ohio and Superior, Wisconsin.
- Member, University Club of Springfield, Ohio 2004-06
- Graduate, Superior Leadership Program, 2007.
- Member, Douglas County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Advisory Committee, 2008-present, chair 2009-present
- Member, Catholic Community Services Board of Directors, Superior, Wisconsin, 2009-present, Vice-chair 2013-present.
- Class Leader, University of Minnesota-Duluth, University for Seniors Program; 2009-*Aircraft and Ships of World War II*; 2010-*Incidents and Anecdotes in Military History*, 2012-*Technology in World War II*
- Presenter, *Creativity from the Heartland: Two Midwestern Case Studies*, 2010 Mutual Concerns of Air and Space Museums, National Air and Space Museum
- Presenter, University of Wisconsin-Superior/Road Scholar Program, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Northland*, 2011, 2012, 2013.

- Instructor, University of Wisconsin-Superior, *Oral History Internship Program*, 2011-present
- Class Leader, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical Institute, *Unusual Military History*, 2012, *Aircraft of WWII*, 2012, *Ships of WWII*, 2013, *Naval Battles*, 2013, *Little-Known Military History*, 2014.