

PRESS RELEASE – MAGIC MUSEUM APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR 11/16/09

The American Museum of Magic in Marshall, Michigan has appointed Jeffrey M. Taylor as its first full-time salaried director. He succeeds Betty Collins, who departed last summer after guiding the museum for many years, eventually becoming its first director. His duties commenced on Nov. 1, 2009. Museum Board Chair Dr. Bradley Taylor observed that with Taylor's appointment, the museum's thirty year tradition of committed leadership will continue. "Jeff brings with him 20 years of professional museum experience, the regard of colleagues from around the state who know him to be an honorable and capable man, and a sly sense of humor," commented Dr. Taylor. "This is a very good move for the Magic Museum."

The American Museum of Magic is a non-profit museum of the history of magic located in two historic buildings in the heart of Marshall, Michigan's National Historic Landmark District. Marshall is located in Calhoun County, between Battle Creek and Jackson along the I-94 corridor of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The 31 year-old museum exists to "inspire and delight the public with the wonder of magic, and documents and celebrates the contributions and resilience of the magician." Its vision is to be a premier Michigan attraction built on unparalleled collections and innovative visitor-centered experiences, employing the highest standards of scholarship and stewardship.

Taylor comes to the museum from service as the Curator of Collections at the Alfred P. Sloan Museum in Flint, Michigan. Under his guidance at the Sloan Museum, the care of the museum's historical collections improved and its popular Buick Gallery opened to the public. The museum also experienced progress in growing its audience to better reflect the diversity of the greater Flint community. In Marshall, he will be responsible for providing overall leadership and guidance for the American Museum of Magic's growing program, caring for its significant collections and serving as liaison between the community and board of directors. He will implement a newly adopted strategic plan and will be responsible for managing the daily operations of the museum. "I'm really looking forward to growing the Museum, and Marshall seems like it's the perfect community to nurture that growth," says Taylor.

Taylor began his museum career in the 1990s as a curatorial assistant at the Sloan Museum while an undergraduate at the University of Michigan – Flint. Holding a master's degree in American Culture from the University of Michigan, Taylor has served on numerous local and regional initiatives and is active with professional organizations such as the American Association of Museums. He served as Treasurer on the board of the Michigan Museums Association for the last two years.

The American Museum of Magic Museum has recently transitioned from a private collection to a non-profit public museum with the passing of its founders, Bob and Elaine Lund, in 1995 and 2006, respectively. A thirteen member Board of Trustees, drawn from around the region and carefully recruited from a variety of professional backgrounds, has charted a new course for the museum that will guide its development into a prominent institution that preserves the memories and traditions of both small town and world-renowned performers, highlighting their contributions to popular culture. An impressive collection of artifacts, illusions, documents, books and memorabilia interprets four centuries of magic and magicians from throughout the world. It is the largest museum of its kind open to the public in the United States, and has been referred to as the "Smithsonian of American Magic."

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