

Sharlot Hall Museum

Code of Ethics

I. PREFACE

The Sharlot Hall Museum is a public trust grounded in the tradition of service and organized for the benefit of the public it serves. Likewise, the Museum’s staff, volunteers and Trustees hold their respective positions as a public trust, and therefore owe a duty of loyalty to the Museum and its constituents. They have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the Museum is governed and operated in accordance with the law and the ethical principles set forth in this Policy and the American Alliance of Museums’ *Code of Ethics for Museums*.

For its many decades of existence, the Museum—its governing authority, staff, volunteers and Trustees—has continued the vision of its founder to hold its collections and information in trust as a benefit to those for whom the Museum was established to serve. Collectively and individually, we will continue to do so.

Within the basic framework for operations and this Code of Ethics, the Museum complies with applicable local, state, and federal laws and international conventions, as well as with the specific legal standards governing trust responsibilities. While compliance is taken as a given and from this baseline of legal standards, the Museum and those responsible do more than avoid legal liability by taking affirmative, proactive steps to maintain integrity so as to warrant and inure public confidence by actions both legal and ethical.

Loyalty to the mission of the Museum and its publics is the essence of this Museum's work, whether volunteer or paid. Where conflicts-of-interest arise – whether perceived, potential, or actual – there is no compromise to the duty of loyalty to the Museum and to the public’s trust therein. It is affirmed that no individual shall use his or her position in this Museum for personal gain or to benefit another at the expense of the Museum, its mission, its reputation, the society it represents, nor the constituencies it serves.

To affirm that ‘ethic’ inculcated within this public trust and to elaborate its ongoing application in governance, the Museum promulgates this Code of Ethics. In subscribing to this Code, the Museum accepts responsibility for the actions of members of its governing authority, employees, and volunteers in the performance of Museum-related duties. The Museum affirms its chartered purpose, ensures the prudent application of its resources, and seeks to maintain public confidence. This collective endeavor strengthens the Museum's work and its contributions as a public trust to society — past, present, and future.

II. MUSEUM GOVERNANCE

The Museum is operated by the Prescott Historical Society, an agency of the State of Arizona. The Sharlot Hall Historical Society is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation that provides financial and volunteer support to the operating entity. The primary responsibility for governance, institutional policies, financial stability, and legal accountability of the Museum rests with the Board of Trustees of the Societies (“Board”). Operational responsibility resides with the staff.

Trustee Responsibilities

The Board serves the public interest as it relates to the Museum, and is accountable to the public as well as to the institution. In most cases, the Board acts as the ultimate legal entity for the Museum, and is responsible for determining the mission and purpose of the Museum and for ensuring that the Museum is governed consistent with that mission and applicable law.

Trustees should not attempt to act in their individual capacities. They may only act corporately, not as individuals. Members of the Board, including its officers, have no power or authority individually. The Board can only act as a body.

In all activities and statements, Trustees must make it clear whether they are acting or speaking for the Museum or themselves. They must not represent, or appear to represent, the Museum without the authority to do so.

Trustees should maintain Museum information in confidence when it concerns the administration or activities of the Museum and when it is not generally available to the public. This does not preclude public disclosure of information that is properly in the public domain, or information that should be released in fulfilling the Museum's accountability to the public.

The Board has strong obligations to provide the proper environment for the physical security and preservation of the collections, and to monitor and develop the financial structure of the Museum so that it continues to exist as an institution of vitality and quality. In keeping with their primary responsibility for the protection of the Museum's collection, Trustees should not jeopardize the collection by using it as collateral for a loan or by otherwise selling or mortgaging the collection in order to secure funds for operations, buildings, or expansion of the facility.

The Board must ensure that all of the Museum's assets are properly and effectively used for public purposes.

Conflict of Interest

Individuals who are knowledgeable in fields related to Museum activities can be of great assistance, but conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts may arise because of these interests or activities.

Trustees must endeavor to conduct all of their activities, including those relating to persons closely associated with them and to business or other organizations, in such a way that no conflict will arise between the Trustee's interests and the policies, operations, or interests of the Museum. The appearance of such conflicts also should be avoided.

All conflicts-of-interest, or apparent conflicts-of-interest, must be disclosed and addressed in an appropriate manner. Disclosure statements should be updated whenever significant changes occur. Whenever a Trustee becomes aware of a real or perceived conflict, the Trustee must recuse him or herself from any debate, discussion, or decision-making process related to said conflict-of-interest, and to ameliorate this conflict by whatever means recommended and approved by the Board.

No Trustee may take personal advantage of information available to him or her because of his or her Board membership, and should conflict develop between the needs of the individual and the Museum, those of the Museum will prevail.

No Trustee, person close to him or her, or individual who might act for him or her may acquire objects from the collections of the Museum.

Trustees serve the Museum and its public. They should not attempt to derive any personal material advantages from their connection with the Museum. Trustees should use Museum property only for official purposes, and make no personal use of the Museum's collection, property, or services in a manner not available to a comparable member of the general public.

To the extent applicable, Trustees must also conform to the ethical standards for Museum staff, as set forth in Section III.

The Trustee-Director Relationship

The Board is responsible for selecting the Executive Director, who as Chief Executive Officer of the Societies manages the day-to-day affairs of the organization, and for monitoring and evaluating his or her performance.

The Executive Director of the Museum must at all times serve as the conduit between the Board and the staff. Trustees should avoid giving directions to, acting on behalf of, communicating directly with, or soliciting administrative information from staff personnel, unless such actions are in accord with established policy and procedural guidelines or in a circumstance where the Executive Director is fully apprised of the matter.

The Trustee-Staff Relationship

The Executive Director of the Museum is the chief executive and must at all time serve as the conduit between the Board and the staff. Staff may meet with the Board or with any individual member concerning Museum management only with the full knowledge and approval of the Executive Director.

In instances in which a staff member believes the Executive Director is acting in an unethical manner, he or she must first inform the Executive Director before discussing the problem with the Board.

Professional Conduct

Trustees must at all times conduct themselves professionally and provide the appropriate oversight to ensure that the Museum is operated in accordance with standards and practices that are responsive to and representative of the public interest, including attention to its collections, programs and its financial and personnel resources.

Volunteering

Board members who volunteer for Museum activities unrelated to their role as a Trustee must understand that they are subordinate to the staff for which they work, and must not exercise undue influence because of their Board position.

III. THE STAFF

Staff Responsibilities

The Museum's staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality, free from personal consideration, or favoritism and work to advance the Museum's

mission. Staff members include those who are employed by the Museum on a full-time, part-time, regular, and temporary.

All staff members are responsible for understanding the duties of their positions and executing those duties to the best of their abilities. The Museum promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness, and integrity. Its human resource policies are fair, establish clear expectations, and provide for meaningful and effective performance evaluation. Open communication among staff is highly valued.

Conflict of Interest

Museum staff should never abuse their official positions or their contacts within the museum community, compete with the Museum, or bring discredit or embarrassment to the Museum or to their profession in any activity, Museum-related or not. They should be prepared to accept the restrictions that are necessary to maintain public confidence in museums and in the museum profession. The terms and restrictions listed here, as well as the reporting procedures and conditions of enforcement, should be read and clearly understood by all staff, interns and volunteers working with the Museum.

Gifts, Favors, Discounts, Dispensations

The Museum is committed to the highest ethical principles in all relationships with business suppliers. Any Museum staff member who is authorized to spend Museum funds should do so with impartiality, honesty, and with regard only to the best interests of the Museum.

Museum staff and others in a close relationship to them must not accept gifts, favors, loans, or other dispensations or things of more than minimal value that are available to them in connection with their duties for the Museum. Gifts include discounts on personal purchases from suppliers who sell items or furnish services to the Museum, except where such discounts are regularly offered to the general public.

Responsibility to Museum Property, Real and Intangible

No staff member should use, outside Museum premises or, for personal gain, any object or item that is a part of the Museum's collection or under the guardianship of the Museum, or use any other property, supplies or resources of the Museum, except for the official business of the Museum. The name and reputation of this Museum are valuable assets and should not be exploited either for personal advantage or the advantage of any other person or entity.

Information about the administrative or non-scholarly activities of the Museum that staff may acquire in the course of their duties which is not generally known or available to the public, must be treated as information proprietary to the Museum. Such information should not be used for personal advantage or other purposes. Staff members are responsible for maintaining the security of confidential records and information, and the privacy of individuals or groups who support the Museum.

Staff members should be circumspect in referring members of the public to outside suppliers to the Museum. Whenever possible, more than a single qualified source should be named in order to avoid the appearance of personal favoritism in referrals.

Outside Volunteer Activities

Staff members who volunteer for an outside organization under circumstances that could suggest that he or she is acting in an official capacity as a member of the Museum staff, disclosure is recommended to avoid possible misrepresentation. Museum professionals should conduct themselves so that their activities on behalf of community or public service organizations do not reflect adversely on the reputation or integrity of this Museum.

Representing the Museum

In all activities and statements, staff must make it clear whether they are acting or speaking for the Museum or themselves. They must not represent, or appear to represent, the Museum without the authority to do so.

Responsibility to the Collection

Staff members who have direct responsibility for collections (including the Executive Director) should not actively collect in subject areas collected by the Museum. Active collecting is defined as owning, and actively and persistently trying to increase the size or quality of, and a vocational collection of buying, selling and trading. This does not prevent these employees from owning antiques or art for casual use in their homes, or from having period costumes, weapons, accoutrements, etc. for use in historical “reenacting.” However, to protect both themselves and the Museum, they should file an inventory of such possessions with the Executive Director, and update that inventory as needed.

Staff members who do not have direct responsibility for collections may establish personal collections in subject areas collected by the Museum. However, they must never compete with the Museum or attempt to intercede in any Museum transaction in order to obtain items for their personal collection. Further, it is strongly recommended that they provide the Director with an inventory of their collections and update that inventory as needed.

Staff members may not acquire objects from the collections owned by or on loan to the Museum.

Staff members may not act as a dealer, be employed by a dealer, or retain interest in a dealership in historic, prehistoric, or ethnographic materials that overlap the collections of the Museum. For purposes herein, dealing is defined as buying and selling for personal profit, as opposed to occasional sales to upgrade a personal collection, or to dispose of unwanted private property.

Outside Employment

The Museum’s policy respecting secondary employment sets forth the standards for outside employment. Staff may accept outside employment on their own time; however, they should never allow such employment to interfere with the full and conscientious performance of their Museum duties. Further, they must notify the Executive Director of such employment. Staff members may not perform consulting or contract work for the Museum for which they are to be paid over and above their regular salaries, unless such work is unrelated to their normal duties and approved by the Executive Director. Staff members may perform non-paid volunteer work that is not within their normal job duties for the Museum at their own volition.

Personal Conduct and Deportment

The reputation and name of the Museum are valuable assets and must be upheld in the eyes of the public and the community. Information about the administration, intra-staff conflicts, or on scholarly activities of the institution must be treated as confidential and not repeated beyond the

walls of the Museum. Museum staff must take care that their personal conduct and deportment both at work and on private time do not bring discredit to the Museum.

Ethical Standards for State Employees

The policies and procedures set forth herein are applicable to persons employed by both the Prescott Historical Society and the Sharlot Hall Historical Society. Prescott Historical Society employees should also consult the State Personnel System Employee Handbook ([http://www.hr.az.gov/PDF/Statewide Employee Handbook.pdf](http://www.hr.az.gov/PDF/Statewide_Employee_Handbook.pdf)) at pages 10-14 for ethical standards for state employees. In the case of any conflict between the policies contained herein and the state policies, the latter will govern.

IV. THE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have played an active and important role in the Museum. Many of the volunteers are in direct contact with visitors on a daily basis and may be seen as "the face" of the Museum, to their peers and the public. When acting on behalf of the Museum, volunteers understand their duties and execute them to the best of their abilities. They convey the mission and goals of the Museum, and as its representatives, refrain from promoting their own institutions or businesses.

It is incumbent upon the paid staff to be supportive of volunteers, receive them as fellow workers, and willingly provide them with appropriate training and opportunity for their intellectual enrichment.

Volunteers have a responsibility to the Museum as well, especially those with access to the Museum's collections, programs, and privileged information. Access to the Museum's inner activities is a privilege and the lack of material compensation for effort expended on behalf of the Museum in no way frees the volunteer from adherence to the standards that apply to paid staff. Volunteers must work toward the betterment of the institution and not for personal gain other than the natural gratification and enrichment inherent in museum participation.

Although the Museum provides special privileges and benefits to its volunteers, they should not accept gifts, favors, discounts, loans or other dispensations, or things of value that accrue to them from other parties in connection with carrying out duties for the Museum. Conflict of interest restrictions and gift policies placed upon the paid staff of the Museum must be explained to volunteers and observed by them. Volunteers must respect the confidentiality of any inside information to which their volunteer activities give them access.

V. MUSEUM MANAGEMENT POLICY

The members of the Museum's staff and the Board should respect the professional expertise of others on the staff. The Board should be structured so that the resolution of issues involving professional matters incorporates the opinions and professional judgments of relevant members of the staff.

Responsibility for the final decisions rests with the management or Trustees and all staff members should support these decisions. No staff member, however, can be required to reverse, alter, or suppress his or her professional judgment in order to conform to a management decision.

Personnel Practices and Equal Opportunity

Museum employees must always be dedicated to the high standards and discipline of their profession, respect the expertise of their colleagues, and work in full support and cooperation with each other.

In all matters related to staffing practices, as well as Trustee selection, management practices, volunteer opportunity, collection usage, and relationship with the public at large, decisions cannot be made on the basis of discriminatory factors such as race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, military or veteran status, or any other status protected by law.

The Museum recognizes that diversity is a significant force within its own social fabric and in the community and encourages employment opportunities and accessibility at the Museum for all people. The Museum promotes inclusiveness, and its staff, board and volunteers strive to ensure that diversity is reflected in its programs and committees. The Museum promotes diversity in its hiring, retention, promotion and board recruitment efforts and in the programs it develops for its constituencies.

Concerns relating to perceived unethical behavior should be discussed with the employee's immediate supervisor, the Manager of Administration, or the Executive Director.

Ownership of Scholarly Material or Art

The objects in the Museum's collection, their documentation, and all additional documentation developed subsequent to their acquisition, are the property of the Museum.

Scholarship or artistic work and applicable copyrights done as part of employment and funded by the Museum are the property of the Museum. If the activity is a personal project, done on personal time, and not within the scope of assigned responsibilities, then the work is the property of the staff member.

Teaching, research, writing, and artistic endeavors have the potential to increase an employee's knowledge, abilities and value to the Museum. Such activities should be encouraged so long as they do not conflict with Museum duties, and are done with the approval of the Executive Director.

Museum Store and Commercial Activities

The Museum Store and other commercial activities in the Museum, as well as publicity relating to them, should be in keeping with the Museum's mission, should be relevant to the collections and basic educational purposes of the Museum, and must not compromise the quality of those collections.

VI. THE COLLECTIONS

The collections of the Museum are at the core of its mission in its service to the general public. It is the Museum's highest ethical obligation to protect the physical integrity and safety of the collection. The Museum staff is accountable for the safekeeping of the collection and collection records.

The acquisition, management and deaccessioning of the Museum's collections shall be in accordance with the Museum's Collections Management Policy and the ethical principles set forth therein. Personnel with direct responsibility for collections will also follow the American Alliance of Museums' *Code of Ethics for Museums* and *Code of Ethics for Curators*, as well as similar codes pertaining to their own professional specialty (e.g., conservator, archivist, registrar, etc.).

Management, Care, and Preservation

A museum's obligation to its collection is paramount. Stewardship of collections entails the highest public trust and carries with it the presumption of rightful ownership, permanence, care, documentation, accessibility, and responsible disposal. Maintenance of collection's information, in orderly and retrievable form, is critical to the collection and is a central obligation of those charged with collection management.

The Museum must be in control of their collections and know the location and the condition of the objects that they hold. This also includes the information about each item that establishes its proper place and importance to the Museum's mission. Procedures must be maintained for the periodic evaluation of the condition of the collections and for their general and special maintenance.

The physical care of the collection and its accessibility must be in keeping with professionally accepted standards. Failing this, Museum Trustees and management are ethically obliged either to correct the deficiency or to dispose of the collection, preferably to another comparable institution.

Acquisition and Disposal

In the delicate area of acquisition and disposal of museum objects, the Museum must weigh carefully the interests of the public for which it holds the collection in trust, the donor's intent in the broadest sense, and the interests of the scholarly and the cultural community it serves.

The Museum's Collections Policy discusses in detail the acquisition and disposal of objects. It is incumbent upon appropriate Museum staff to review and understand the Museum's Collections Policy and procedures as adopted by the Board of Trustees, when carrying out their job responsibilities.

Items collected by the Museum must be relevant to its purposes and activities, be accompanied by a valid legal title, preferably be unrestricted but with any limitations clearly described, and be properly cataloged, preserved, stored, or exhibited. The Museum must remain free to improve its collections through selective disposal and acquisition. In general, items should be kept as long as they retain their physical integrity, authenticity, and usefulness for the Museum's purposes.

When disposing of an object, the Museum must determine that it has the legal right to do so. Disposal of collections through sale, trade or destruction must be done in furtherance of the Museum's mission and its public trust responsibilities. In no event shall the proceeds from a sale be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of collections. Although the result of deaccessioning is to provide funds for purchasing other items for the collection or provide for their care, consideration of deaccessioning shall not be undertaken on the basis of cash value of the objects to be sold.

Members of the Museum community (staff, volunteers, board members) and their relatives may not acquire or otherwise benefit from the disposition of deaccessioned artifacts.

While the governing entity bears final responsibility for the collections, including the acquisition and disposal process, the curatorial and archival staffs are best qualified to assess item's pertinence to the collections or the Museum's programs.

Appraisals

Donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law; however, the Museum cannot appraise or place a monetary value on objects. Donors, therefore, are expected to get independent appraisals for the objects they are donating.

Availability of Collections

Although the public must have reasonable access to the collections on a nondiscriminatory basis, the Museum assumes as a primary responsibility the safeguarding of their materials and, therefore, may regulate access to them.

The judgment and recommendation of curatorial and archival staff members, regarding the use of the collections, must be given utmost consideration. In formulating their recommendations staff must consider the physical integrity and safety of the collections.

Truth in Presentation

It is the responsibility of the Museum's professionals to use Museum collections for exhibitions. Intellectual honesty and objectivity in the presentation of items are the duty of every Museum professional. They must use their best efforts to ensure that exhibits are honest and objective expressions and do not perpetuate myths or stereotypes. Exhibits must provide with candor and tact an honest and meaningful view of the subject. Sensitive areas such as ethnic and social history are of most critical concern.

Human Remains and Sacred Objects

The Museum will not collect human skeletal material. A small amount of human bone, such as a composite skeleton, may be kept for educational purposes. It may hold human remains preceding reburial at the behest of a tribal authority. Remains of people of all races and religions will be treated with appropriate respect.

Human remains will not be exhibited in any context that is not in unequivocal good taste. Remains that have been identified as, or are likely to have been, members of groups whose beliefs prohibit viewing or reference to the dead (see NAGPRA) will not be exhibited. Human remains brought to the Museum from public or private land will be referred to the Arizona State Museum as stipulated by NAGPRA.

The Museum will not actively seek to collect sacred or ceremonial objects or objects of tribal patrimony. Sacred objects and objects of patrimony of all races and religions will be treated with appropriate respect. The Museum will decline objects known to be of current religious or ceremonial significance to Native Americans, or to be of tribal patrimony, and will inform appropriate tribal leaders of such objects on the market or in non-Indian hands.

Sacred or ceremonial objects and objects of tribal patrimony in the collection will be offered for repatriation to appropriate Native American leaders as stipulated by NAGPRA. In lieu of

repatriation, the Museum may negotiate with tribes to arrange relationships where the Museum maintains custody of sacred, ceremonial, or patrimonial objects, but tribal members monitor its exhibition, storage, handling, and conservation to prevent sacrilege, or are given access for periodic treatment (i.e., ritual feeding of Kachina masks), or for prayer.

VII. PROGRAMS

The Museum's educational programming, including its exhibits, is central to its mission as an educational and cultural institution. The Museum's staff, Trustees and volunteers, must ensure that its exhibitions, research, scholarship, publications and other educational activities will foster public and community understanding and appreciation of the historical, social, cultural and natural aspects of Arizona, with emphasis on the Central Highlands, and promote involvement in and support for research, collections, conservation, exhibits, and related programs. In furtherance of its public trust responsibilities, the Museum must ensure that its exhibitions and programming are founded on sound scholarship and intellectual integrity, and acknowledges the contributions of diverse cultural and ethnic groups to the historical development of its mission area.

VIII. PROMULGATION

Much of this Code of Ethics was adapted from the American Association of Museums (AAM) Code of Ethics, 2000, [Code of Ethics for Museums](#). It is a living document, designed to be disseminated, used and updated. This Code of Ethics will be:

- Disseminated to all employees;
- Incorporated into the Board of Trustees Policy Manuel; and
- Reviewed at the new employee orientation for all new staff, as well as at the new manager's orientation.

Adopted by the Boards of Trustees of the Prescott and Sharlot Hall Historical Societies on September 26, 2017.