



BESSER
MUSEUM
for Northeast Michigan
ART • HISTORY • SCIENCE

CODE OF ETHICS

Revised and Approved by the Board of Trustees on February 19, 2004

Effective February 19, 2004

Replaces Statement Concerning Conflict of Interest adopted June 26, 1979,
the AASLH Statement of Professional Ethics adopted by the Executive Committee on November 12, 1996,
and the Code of Ethics adopted May 3, 2002.

This *Code of Ethics* for the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan is derived from several sources. Most prominent are the *Code of Ethics for Museums* from the American Association of Museums, 1994; the *Code of Ethics for Museum Friends and Volunteers*, from the World Federation of Friends of Museums, 1998; *Writing a Museum Code of Ethics, Resource Report*, AAM 1993; *Of Mutual Respect and Other Things*, by Helmuth J. Naumer, 1989; *Guidelines on Exhibiting Borrowed Objects*, AAM, July 2000; and *Guidelines for Museums on Developing and Managing Individual Donor Support*, AAM, November 2002.

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INTRODUCTION

Museums make their unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the world's natural and cultural resources. As stewards they own and use specimens and artifacts to advance knowledge, promote understanding, and nourish the human spirit. Although diverse in their various missions, museums have in common their nonprofit form of organization and a commitment of service to the public. Their collections are the basis for research, exhibits, and programs that invite public participation. It is incumbent on museums to be resources for humankind and in all their activities to foster an informed appreciation of the rich and diverse world we have inherited. It is also incumbent upon them to preserve that inheritance for posterity.

Museums in the United States are organized as public trusts, holding their collections and information as a benefit for those they were established to serve. Members of their Boards of Trustees, employees, and volunteers are committed to the interest of these beneficiaries. As nonprofit institutions, museums comply with applicable local, state and federal laws and international conventions, as well as with the specific legal standards governing trust responsibilities. This *Code of Ethics* takes that compliance as given. But legal standards are a minimum. Museums and those responsible for them must do more than avoid legal liability; they must take affirmative steps to maintain their integrity so as to warrant public confidence. They must act not only legally but also ethically. Therefore, a *Code of Ethics* can outline the ethical standards that frequently exceed legal minimums.

Loyalty to the museum and to the public it serves is the essence of museum work, whether volunteer or paid. Where conflicts of interest arise – actual, potential, or perceived – the duty of loyalty must never be compromised. No individual may use his or her position in a museum for personal gain or to benefit another at the expense of the museum, its mission, its reputation and the society it serves.

In subscribing to this *Code of Ethics*, the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan (Besser Museum) assumes responsibility for the actions of the members of its governing authority – the Board of Trustees and Executive Director--its employees and its volunteers in the performance of museum-related duties.

GOVERNANCE: BOARD OF TRUSTEES & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Museum governance is a public trust responsible for the museum's service to society. The Board of Trustees and the Executive Director protect and enhance the museum's collections and programs and its physical, human, and financial resources. They ensure that all these resources support the museum's mission, respond to the pluralism of society, and respect the diversity of natural and cultural heritage.

Regarding the board's general responsibilities:

- ◆ The Trustees must ensure that all those who work for or on behalf of the Besser Museum understand and support its mission and public trust responsibilities. Good stewardship evokes the highest public trust and must be carried out with integrity.
- ◆ The museum must act in accordance with its basic documents and with applicable state and federal law. The Trustees and Executive Director ensure that no policies or activities will jeopardize the nonprofit status or mission of the museum or reflect unfavorably upon it as an institution devoted to public service.

- ◆ Trustees must understand and fulfill their trusteeship and act corporately, not as individuals. A board can act only at properly called meetings at which a quorum exists or through proper delegation of some part of its authority to a committee. Secret meetings, hidden agendas, innuendoes, or power plays are unacceptable in the museum.
- ◆ As a publicly accountable institution, the museum shall take reasonable steps to make its actions visible and understandable to the public, especially where lack of visibility could reasonably lead to appearances of conflict of interest.
- ◆ All Trustees must be members of the museum to demonstrate their leadership and support.
- ◆ Professional standards and practices inform and guide museum operations. Policies are articulated and prudent oversight is practiced.
- ◆ All Trustees understand that the primary responsibility for museum financial stability resides with them. Each board member accepts responsibility to provide 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.
- ◆ All board committees are responsible to the board as a whole. Only matters specifically authorized by the bylaws or by special action of the board fall within their purview. No committee, including the Executive Committee, may establish policy.
- ◆ All persons (staff, volunteers, vendors) selling items at the museum shall be fully aware of their source, quality, authenticity and educational worth. Misrepresentations, whether intentional or not, reflect upon the reputation of the museum.
- ◆ The Trustees shall maintain the intellectual integrity of, and the museum's control over, all its activities.
- ◆ Board members shall use museum property only for official purposes, and shall make no personal use of the museum's collections, property or services in a manner not available to a comparable member of the general public.

Regarding possible conflicts of interest:

- ◆ Each Trustee and the director must endeavor to conduct his/her activities, including those relating to persons closely associated with them and to businesses or other organizations, in such a way that no conflict will arise between the other interest and the policies, operations or interest of the museum. Each Trustee shall avoid carefully the reality and the appearance of using their positions on the board, or the information and access gained from their positions, for personal gain.
- ◆ Trustees, persons close to Trustees, or persons acting for Trustees must not acquire objects from the collections of the museum, except when the object and its source have been advertised, its full history has been made available, and it is sold at public auction or otherwise clearly offered for sale in the public marketplace.
- ◆ Prior to joining the board, all Trustees must fully disclose to the board the extent of their personal collections. All Trustees shall refrain from personal collecting in any manner that conflicts with the interests or credibility of the museum. No Trustee is to compete with the museum for objects; no Trustee is to take personal advantage of information available to him/her because of board

membership; and, should conflict develop between the needs of the individual and the museum, those of the museum shall prevail.

- ◆ Governance promotes the public good rather than individual causes. It is unethical for Trustees to engage in any activity that may compromise the integrity of the museum or undermine the confidence of the museum staff and the public.
- ◆ Whenever a matter arises for action by the Board of Trustees, or the museum engages in an activity where there is a possible conflict or the appearance of conflict between the interests of the museum and an outside or personal interest of a Trustee or that of a person close to the Trustee, the outside interest should be made a matter of record. In those cases where the Trustee is present when a discussion or vote is taken in connection with such a question, the Trustee should avoid discussion of any planned actions and should abstain from voting. When neither disclosure nor abstention is sufficient to avoid conflict or the appearance thereof, the Trustee must resign.

Regarding the board's relationship with the Executive Director:

- ◆ The Executive Director must be a person of character and integrity with both professional stature and administration experience to deal with ethics, changing legislation, regulations, and public demands. This individual must be responsive to Trustees, the community, and staff. The board should expect, welcome, and encourage this leadership.
- ◆ The Executive Director shall provide the Trustees with current and complete financial information in a comprehensible form, to bring before the board any matters involving policy questions, and to keep them informed on a timely basis about all other significant or substantial matters or intended actions affecting the museum.
- ◆ As the operational head of the museum, the Executive Director is recognized as a peer by Trustees. The board establishes policy; the director carries out that policy and oversees operations. The jobs are equal but divided, and this division should be the basis for communication and progress, not disrespect or mistrust. Both parties have the same objective: to provide a properly run museum of the highest quality. The relationship must be honest, straightforward, and without personality conflict. Mutual respect is the key.
- ◆ The Trustees must act as a full board in appointing or dismissing the Executive Director, and the relationship between the director and the board shall reflect the primacy of museum goals over all personal or interpersonal considerations.

Regarding the board's relationship with staff:

- ◆ Trustees must avoid giving directions to, acting on behalf of, or soliciting administrative information from employees unless the Executive Director is apprised.
- ◆ Trustees must respect the professional expertise of the staff, and acknowledge that the Executive Director alone handles all aspects of human resource management including staff employment and discharge, determining staff duties and organizational structure, and setting salaries within Board approved budget parameters.
- ◆ The board maintains a relationship with staff in which shared roles are recognized and separate responsibilities respected.

- ◆ The board bears final responsibility for the collections, but the director and curatorial staff are best qualified to assess the pertinence of an object to the collections or programs. Only for clear and compelling reasons should an object be disposed of or added to the collections against the advice of the museum's professional staff.
- ◆ Trustees shall not seek staff assistance for personal needs to an extent greater than that available to a member of the general public in similar circumstances.

VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS

VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, TRUSTEES, AND MUSEUM MEMBERS

This *Code of Ethics* applies to all who contribute support in any way to the Besser Museum. This includes Trustees, the Founders Society, the Docents, committees or other auxiliary groups, individuals, donors, associated organizations (such as Northeast MI Artists' Guild, Thunder Bay Woodcarvers, Genealogical Society, Doll Club, Garden Club, Weaver's Guild, etc.), and museum members who contribute towards the museum's development, operations, public presence and influence. All act on a voluntary and non-remunerative basis. Their support is moral, financial, or consists of voluntary work or expertise.

Volunteers and friends are afforded special access to the activities of the Besser Museum. They must keep in mind that their privileged status mandates ethical obligations towards the museum.

Regarding the general responsibilities of volunteers and friends:

- ◆ Volunteers must carry out their activities in an open manner and in a spirit of cooperation with the museum staff. There is no room for secret meetings, hidden agendas, innuendoes, or power plays.
- ◆ Volunteers shall support the Besser Museum and its activities with generosity and enthusiasm, but shall not interfere with the administrative application of the policies established by the Board of Trustees and carried out by the Executive Director and staff.
- ◆ They expect no benefit, financial or other, save the satisfaction of contributing to the maintenance and development of the museum and to the satisfaction of the public it serves.
- ◆ All volunteers that serve the museum on a regular, continuing basis (Docents, departmental volunteers, Founders Society) must be museum members so that they are fully knowledgeable about museum operations and activities. This does not apply to occasional or single event volunteers.
- ◆ Each individual or group within the museum's organization shall work within a structured framework with a designated staff liaison. This promotes a fully beneficial partnership as well as continuity and a lasting relationship. To that end, the museum shall delegate a staff representative to attend meetings and to work with each museum group.
- ◆ Volunteers must conform to the health, safety and security regulations of the museum, and respect its operational guidelines.
- ◆ Volunteers must honor the confidentiality of any information they may have regarding the management and activities of the institution.

- ◆ When friends and volunteers donate works of art, historical artifacts or specimens, they must make every effort to ensure the object's authenticity and origin and should follow the regulations of the museum. Major donations of artifacts or specimens should be made to the museum only with the advance approval of the Executive Director and in accordance with the museum's acquisitions policy.
- ◆ Volunteers should not represent the museum to media unless directly authorized to do so by the Executive Director.
- ◆ When carrying out voluntary work in areas of operation controlled by staff—particularly in the collections, research, exhibits and education fields—volunteers and friends should act only with the agreement of the relevant staff. They should respect the obligations to which regular staff are subjected, and must be careful that their activities do not overlap with staff responsibilities.
- ◆ Departmental volunteers are asked to operate within staff definitions of tasks to be performed and their means of execution. They must hold confidential matters of program function and administration.
- ◆ Volunteers should not accept gifts, favors, discounts, loans or other things of value that accrue to them from other parties in connection with carrying out their duties for the museum.
- ◆ Extreme care is required whenever a volunteer collects objects similar to those collected by the museum. No volunteer may use his/her museum affiliation to promote his/her or any associate's personal collecting activities.

Regarding the Founders Society and Museum Docents:

- ◆ The Founders Society and the Docents are auxiliary (subsidiary) organizations that operate within the museum and under the direction of the Executive Director. As such they work closely with staff and act as official representatives of the museum in all their activities.
- ◆ Actions taken by the Founders Society and the Docents should show loyalty to both the museum and their group.
 - (1) The goals they set and the programs they adopt must be aligned with the museum's mission and within the policies established by the Board of Trustees, and with the participation and agreement of the museum's Executive Director.
 - (2) Their boards and officers must maintain an open relationship with the Executive Director who will facilitate cooperation with the Trustees, staff and other museum entities. The Executive Director, or the director's designee, will serve as the official liaison between these organizations and the museum.
 - (3) They must coordinate their fundraising and programmatic activities with the plans and programs of the museum. When raising money, or soliciting contributions or in-kind gifts on behalf of the museum, volunteers must do so with integrity and must use donations only for the donor's intended purpose.
 - (4) All members of the Founders Society and the Docents must be members of the museum.
 - (5) Members of these organizations will not make requests of staff or use museum resources without first securing approval from the Executive Director.

Regarding the museum's responsibility to its volunteers and friends:

- ◆ Volunteers and friends should expect a professional and courteous relationship with museum management and staff. It is important that the museum for its part acknowledges the value of their contributions and assists in implementation so that a fully productive collaboration results.
- ◆ Staff shall be supportive of volunteers, receive them as fellow workers, and willingly provide appropriate training and opportunity for their intellectual enrichment. Volunteers shall be assigned meaningful tasks and provided with the necessary tools to complete those tasks.
- ◆ Trustees and staff shall recognize volunteer commitment and contributions, both inside and outside the institution.
- ◆ The museum shall support the ventures agreed upon by volunteer organizations and the Executive Director. The museum shall put at their disposal the necessary resources to pursue goals common to the institution and the group.
- ◆ To guide volunteers, the museum shall do its best to ensure that they are fully informed of its mission, short and long-term goals, future plans, programs, and administrative procedures.

STAFF

A comprehensive treatment of museum responsibilities and ethics is documented in the *Employees' Handbook* approved by the Board of Trustees on February 1, 2001. However, some warrant expansion or emphasis and they are included here.

Regarding the general responsibilities of staff,

- ◆ Staff shall perform their jobs with the highest ethical and professional standards and shall act with integrity and objectivity. Staff shall accept, as conditions of employment, the restrictions that are necessary to maintain public confidence in the museum and in their profession.
- ◆ Staff's primary work responsibility is to the museum. Any outside employment must be reported to the Executive Director and may not interfere or compete with the operational needs of the museum or compromise the professional integrity or the reputation of the museum. Staff shall not engage in any business or activity with or without remuneration that involves a conflict of interest, or is a violation of local, state or federal law.
- ◆ Full disclosure and strict ethics are followed in the area of personal collections. Acquiring, collecting or owning museum-type objects is not in itself unethical, but it can raise ethical questions. Extreme care is required whenever an employee collects objects similar to those collected by the museum. No employee may use his/her museum affiliation to promote his/her or any associate's personal collecting activities. No employee may participate in any outside sales dealing in objects similar or related to those collected by the museum.
- ◆ No staff member may furnish appraisals of monetary value for any reason, of any object, for anybody including trustees, donors, and museum volunteers. Persons requesting appraisals, even if they are donors of the object to the museum, must secure their own appraisal at their own expense. The museum must avoid assisting the donor in what may appear to be an improper tax deduction.

Instead, a list of qualified appraisers may be given to the inquirer for personal pursuit and care must be taken so that no appearance of personal favoritism in referrals is created.

- ◆ The related areas of identification, authentication and description must be confined to professional museum work and should not be used in connection with outside activities.
- ◆ Employees may not borrow or use for personal purposes any artifact or specimen that is part of the museum's collections.
- ◆ Personal collections other than reference books shall not be stored at the museum.
- ◆ Employees and members of their families must not accept gifts, fees, tips, favors, loans, discounts, *quid pro quo* arrangements, or other dispensations of value that may become available to them in connection with their duties at the museum.
- ◆ Staff must immediately report all gifts accepted on behalf of the museum to the Executive Director, and shall not receive, solicit or offer a bribe in the course of their museum employment.
- ◆ Staff may not buy or sell commercial goods or personal services for personal gain on museum time. Neither shall they use any museum tool, equipment, supplies or services for private gain, personal use or convenience.

Regarding communication and interpersonal relations:

- ◆ Staff and the Executive Director must communicate openly and honestly with each other. The director ensures that the resolution of issues involving professional matters incorporates the opinions and professional judgments of relevant members of the staff. The responsibility for final settlement of differences resides with the Executive Director. All employees are expected to respect and support these decisions and those made by the Board of Trustees. However, no staff member can be required to reverse, alter, or suppress his/her professional judgment to conform to a management decision.
- ◆ On administrative matters or concerns, staff shall first discuss them with the Executive Director, and may communicate with trustees or volunteers only with the Executive Director's knowledge.
- ◆ Employees must not share confidential records on museum personnel, finances, donors or other privileged information with anybody without the approval of the Executive Director. Staff must respect the privacy of individuals and groups that support the museum.
- ◆ Employees should present a positive attitude and professional conduct with staff, colleagues, volunteers, members, and visitors; treat everyone with respect and courtesy; and appreciate diverse audiences regardless of their age, abilities, disabilities, sexual orientation, and ethnic, religious, or economic backgrounds.
- ◆ Staff must be loyal to the museum and not harm the museum's relationship with visitors, other employees, volunteers, suppliers, agencies or the general public. They should act constructively and avoid malicious gossip and derogatory comments against each other, the trustees, director, and volunteers, and must not spread rumors or engage in any behavior that creates discord and hurts the museum's interests.

COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH

Museums generally achieve prominence and importance from their collections, which constitute the primary difference between them and other institutions. Since the collections are the essence of the museum, they are its first responsibility.

The distinctive character of museum ethics derives from the acquisition, ownership, care, and use of artifacts and specimens representing the world's natural and cultural heritage. This stewardship of collections entails the highest public trust and carries with it the presumption of rightful ownership, permanence, care, documentation, accessibility, and responsible disposal.

Regarding field studies and collecting:

- ◆ Field programs must be executed legally and responsibly in acquiring specimens and data. Staff must discourage unethical and destructive practices associated with acquiring, transporting and importing objects and they must avoid even the appearance of engaging in clandestine activity.
- ◆ Field programs must be preceded by investigation, disclosure and communication sufficient to ascertain the full knowledge, approval, and collaboration of the individuals and entities to which the activity is appropriately of concern.
- ◆ Collections-related activities must promote the public good rather than individual financial gain. They are conducted for scholarly or educational purposes only.
- ◆ Staff and their volunteers may not support an illicit market or trade or contribute to the degradation of natural resources to acquire collections in art, history, or science.
- ◆ Normally, no artifact or specimen should be acquired that cannot be properly cared for and used.
- ◆ In both act and appearance, staff shall honor the beliefs and customs of individuals and societies.

Regarding the museum's responsibility to the collections:

- ◆ The museum's collections must support its mission and public trust responsibilities.
- ◆ The collections are not to be thought of as financial assets, and may not be used as collateral for loans or sold to secure funds for operations, buildings or expansions of the museum.
- ◆ The collections must be protected, secure, unencumbered, and preserved.
- ◆ The collections must be accounted for, documented, maintained and periodically evaluated.
- ◆ The museum must have in place a written Collections Policy and Procedures Manual, approved by the Executive Director and Board of Trustees, that is publicly accessible on request, to protect the museum's assets and reputation and to guide institutional actions.
- ◆ Accessioned collections shall not be made available to any individual on any basis for personal use, either on or off the premises, or for any other purpose contrary to the adopted collections policies.
- ◆ Reasonable public access to the collections and related information is permitted and many items may be displayed for predetermined periods of time. However, the museum's primary responsibility is to

safeguard the artifacts and specimens and, therefore, it shall regulate access to them or refrain from exhibiting them if such activity is deemed detrimental to their safekeeping.

- ◆ The unique and special nature of human remains and American Indian funerary and sacred objects are securely and respectfully housed and carefully maintained as archival items. They are available to qualified researchers, educators and Native Peoples, and all scholarly work on them is performed with dignity and sensitivity to various beliefs.
- ◆ When disposing of objects from the collections, the museum must first determine that it has the legal right to do so. The museum must not allow objects from its collections to be acquired privately by any museum officer, volunteer, member of the board or his/her representative, unless the objects are sold publicly and with complete disclosure of their history. Staff who are part of the deaccessioning procedure may not acquire deaccessioned objects by sale or any other means.
- ◆ Disposal of collections through sale, trade, or research activities is solely for the advancement of the museum's mission and due consideration must be given to the museum community in general. Proceeds from the sale of collections are to be used consistent with the established standards of the museum's discipline, but in no event shall they be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of collections.

PROGRAMS, EXHIBITIONS AND SALES

Museums serve society by advancing an understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural world through exhibition, research, scholarship, publications, educational activities and Museum Store sales. These further the museum's mission and are responsible to the concerns, interests, and needs of society.

The museum should assume a position of leadership in the effort to halt continuing degradation of artistic, historical and natural history resources.

Responsibility of the museum to educational programs:

- ◆ The programs must support the mission and public trust responsibilities of the museum. They support the public good rather than individual financial gain.
- ◆ The programs must be accessible to everybody and should encourage participation of the widest possible audience consistent with the museum's mission and resources.
- ◆ The programs must respect pluralistic values, traditions, and concerns.
- ◆ Revenue-producing activities that involve relationships with external entities must be compatible with the museum's mission and support its public trust responsibilities.
- ◆ All interpretation in programs and exhibitions must be based on sound scholarship and intellectual integrity. The museum may address a wide variety of social, political, artistic or scientific issues, but it must do so accurately, objectively and without prejudice as the facts have been documented, avoiding myths and stereotypes.
- ◆ There must be a clear connection between the exhibition of objects and the museum's mission, and the inclusion of objects must be consistent with the intellectual integrity of the exhibition.

- ◆ History exhibits must convey to the visitor an understanding and appreciation of the lives of those who lived or live under very different circumstances. Science exhibits must convey respect for all life forms. Art exhibits must respect the variety of perception in human imagination.
- ◆ Docent interpretation must take special care not to dilute or ignore accuracy for the sake of public entertainment, popularity, or personal views. Docents must interpret human cultures and sensitive artifacts with tact and a deep respect for human dignity for all cultures represented.
- ◆ The museum retains full decision making authority over the content and presentation of exhibitions, and shall identify all exhibited artifacts and specimens accurately.
- ◆ The museum shall not accept any commission or fee from the sale of objects borrowed for exhibition.

Responsibility of the museum concerning the sale of items through a Museum Store:

- ◆ The museum may sell merchandise (but not its accessioned collections) through a Museum Store, but all items must be related to the Art, History, or Science mission of the museum. Items sold that are not mission-related jeopardize the museum's non-profit 501(c)(3) classification.
- ◆ The museum may not make a commission on items displayed and sold from an exhibition mounted by the museum. Any artwork or other objects for sale on which the museum does make a commission must clearly be identified as part of a sales show rather than an exhibition.

INDIVIDUAL DONOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Policy adopted by the Board of Trustees on September 25, 2003

The Besser Museum has always benefited from the generosity of individual donors and they, in turn, have benefited by their association with the museum. In recent years this relationship has become more complex and it is appropriate to develop policies and practices to manage real and potential ethical issues involved in the association. In this manner, the museum will fulfill its public trust by promoting policies and procedures concerning its relationship with individual donors as they support mission-related activities and comply with pertinent state, local and federal laws.

The policy shall be approved by the Board of Trustees, be made known to the staff and be accessible to the public. The Trustees may make changes in policy as museum standards and/or the mission of the Besser Museum changes.

Individual donor support refers to cash, real property, or planned gifts from an individual, family or family foundation, regardless of the use of the support and/or the tax implications of the gift. It does not include donations of objects to museum collections. These are governed by accession policies and procedures stated in the Besser Museum's Collections Management Policies and Procedures Manual approved by the Board of Trustees on June 7, 2001.

Regarding Acceptance Procedure for Donor Support:

- ◆ The donor speaks with the Executive Director about the gift: its purpose, use, museum obligations and public recognition of the donor. If the donor is deceased, the same points are discussed with his/her heir(s) or representative of the estate.
- ◆ If the gift exceeds five thousand dollars (\$5000), the Executive Director presents the information to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for approval or acceptance.

Regarding Conflict of Interest:

- ◆ No trustee, staff member or individual may take advantage of his/her position for personal gain or to benefit another at the expense of the museum. Trustees and staff shall conduct themselves in such a manner that no conflict with other organizations or businesses shall arise between them and the museum's interests and policies.
- ◆ Whenever there is a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, between the interests of the museum and the personal interest of a trustee, staff member or individual, or a person close to them, the outside interest should be made a matter of record.
- ◆ A trustee with a conflict of interest should avoid participating in a discussion of a planned action and should abstain from voting on the matter. If disclosure and abstention are not sufficient to avoid conflict, or the appearance of conflict, the trustee may need to resign.
- ◆ The Board of Trustees may establish an Ethics Committee composed of the Board President, the Executive Director and two (2) board members. The Committee shall meet when necessary to make recommendations to the Board on conflict of interest matters.
- ◆ If a board member, a staff member, or a member of the public has an ethical concern, s/he should bring it to the attention of the Board President or the Director. The matter should be discussed to see if it could be clarified and resolved at this level. If the matter cannot be resolved in this situation, it is brought to the Ethics Committee. The committee makes a recommendation to the board and the board makes a decision regarding the concern.
- ◆ If a board, staff or committee member is involved in the matter under consideration, the person must recuse him/herself from the Ethics Committee and from board discussion, and abstain from voting on the matter.
- ◆ As the Development Committee approaches potential donors, it must first ascertain if there is a conflict of interest. The committee should respect the anonymity of those being solicited until the solicitation has actually happened. If a donor requests anonymity, the request should be publicly respected, but not in museum record keeping. This must be clarified with the donor.
- ◆ If a potential donor is unable to participate in a project, event, etc., a notation should be made so as to protect the donor from similar approaches in the near future.

Further information on conflict of interest can be found in the Code of Ethics approved by the board on May 3, 2001.

Regarding Donor Communication:

- ◆ The Executive Director and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, after consultation with appropriate staff, may suggest changes in an agreement with individual donors. Modifications should be made only when there are major changes in finances or other circumstances. The changes will be in written form and signed by the donor or his/her designee and the museum's Executive Director.
- ◆ The museum will not provide financial, tax or legal information to the donor but will urge consultation with the donor's legal and financial advisors.

Regarding Types of Support Accepted:

- ◆ The museum will accept gifts of support from wills, trusts, insurance policies, real estate transactions, stocks and bonds, and donations for all operational expenses and board-approved restricted funds.
- ◆ The gift, if accepted, must fit within the mission of the museum and be reasonable and achievable under the museum's current fiscal and other responsibilities. The museum will have the final word on the appropriateness of the designation.

Regarding Recognition of Donors:

- ◆ The museum shall recognize donors publicly through Newsletter announcements and other publicity acknowledging the gift and its use, unless the donor requests anonymity. The donor's name may be kept confidential but the gift and its purpose will be noted. The donor's name, however, must be noted on museum records of the gift. The official record of the donation is available only to the Executive Director, the Staff Accountant, the Executive Committee of the Board, and to those functionaries who, by law, have access to such information.

Regarding Uncollected Pledges:

- ◆ If a donor does not or cannot honor a pledge, the Ethics Committee will consider the overall impact of the gift on the museum and the museum's past relationship with the donor before deciding on the action to take.
- ◆ If the Ethics Committee finds that some action should be taken, the following procedure is recommended:
 - (1) The President of the Board sends a letter of notification to the individual as a reminder of the purpose of the pledge, amount pledged and amount paid, with a request for payment of the unfulfilled amount.
 - (2) If the first letter does not bring the desired result, a second letter is sent asking for closure by a specified date with a copy of the letter to be signed and returned to assure that the donor is aware of the unpaid pledge.
 - (3) If the donor does not respond, the board President or the Ethics Committee will recommend action to provide closure.
 - (4) If the loss of the pledged funds creates a significant financial problem for the museum, the Board of Trustees may initiate legal means to secure the funds.

Regarding Documentation of Individual Donor Support:

- ◆ The Museum's Executive Director, the Staff Accountant and the Finance Committee are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and retaining documents related to individual donor support.

Regarding Procedures for Documenting Individual Donor Support:

- ◆ Documentation of donor support will be done by the Executive Director or his/her designee by means of a letter or Memorandum of Understanding signed by both parties.
- ◆ The document should include: the activities for which the support may be used, the purpose of the activity, dollar amount given, time limitations, benefits to donor and to the public or museum, and manner of donor recognition. If a donor wishes to advertise the event, the museum retains the right to have final copy approval.
- ◆ If significant changes must be made in the original plan, the donor must be kept informed, options discussed, and significant changes documented and signed.
- ◆ An agreement between a donor and the museum may be terminated if either party is unable to carry out its responsibilities due to unforeseen circumstances.

Regarding Application of Policy:

- ◆ Any person requesting funds or services on behalf of the museum should not do so unless they have obtained the approval of the chair of the Development Committee and the Executive Director.
- ◆ Individuals cannot make commitments for the museum unless they have the consent of the chair of the Development Committee and the Executive Director.
- ◆ All groups meeting at or using the museum must follow the policies of the museum.