



## Archives and Circus Museum

Fiscal Year 2014 - 2015

It has been a busy year at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida. The third season of *Collecting Recollections* at the Historic Asolo Theater had Heidi Herriott, Herta Cuneo, Kay Rosaire, Paul Binder, Victoria Cristiani Rossi, and Ward Hall holding audiences spell bound by their stories of life in the circus. In January, the annual Circus Celebrity Night honored Vicki Unus as Circus Celebrity 2015; also honored were Galla Shawn and Unus as Greats of the Past. The annual Summer Circus Spectacular, a collaboration with the Circus Arts Conservatory, has been performing to sellout crowds. The Ringling achieved a milestone this year: Museum attendance was over 400,000 visitors.

Exhibitions included the DeVos Banners in the Searing Wing of the Museum of Art, *Science & the Spectacular*, and poster exhibitions in the Tibbals Learning Center: *Curiosity, Ladies of the Ring; Evolution of Commercial Printing*; and *From the Four Corners of the Globe*. A five year exhibition schedule is in place and planning has begun on two exhibitions focusing on the contemporary circus. Working with the staff of the Museum Store, many new products were developed inspired by the Museum's circus collections. Now, these items can now be purchased online (<http://store.ringling.org/>).

Over the past year, great deal of work has been done on the circus archival collection. The majority of the Tibbals, MacDougall, Sabia and Riker Collections have been rehoused into acid-free folders and boxes (approximately 700 linear ft.). Finding aids to the Allen Lester Manuscript and the Circus Greeting Card Collections have been completed and are online.

Digitization remains a priority. A grant has been applied for by Milner Library, Illinois State University. If funded, the route book collections of the Milner Library, Circus World Museum and The Ringling will be digitized and made available online. This year we have digitized, rehoused and cataloged 2,500 foreign circus items from the Tibbals Collection (total number of items from the Tibbals foreign collection digitized, rehoused and cataloged: 4,600). The Tibbals film collection is being digitized and rehoused (334 films last year). To date, 18,313 circus documents and artifacts are available online with a total of 79,171 records and artifacts digitized.

Here at The Ringling we are fortunate to draw on the knowledge and talents of our local circus community, circus historians and fans, as well as staff and interns, without whom, the achievements of this year would not have been possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven High". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steven High

Executive Director

John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art