



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Brinton Museum Announces Retirement of Longtime Director and Chief Curator

Big Horn, Wyoming – October 23, 2023

After 34 years leading The Brinton Museum, Kenneth Schuster has announced his retirement, effective December 31, 2023. During his tenure Ken oversaw the transition of The Brinton from a seasonal institution with specialized collections to a premier cultural landmark that enhances connections to the land, people and cultures of the West.

Reflecting on this significant transition, Schuster shared, “It has been my honor and privilege to be a part of the museum’s evolution over the past three decades. The Brinton Museum’s rich history and unique collections have played a pivotal role in preserving Bradford & Helen Brinton’s legacy and celebrating the essence of the American West.”

Kendra Heimbeck, who assumed the role of Executive Director at the beginning of the year, will spearhead the search for Ken’s successor as Curatorial Director. Heimbeck commented, “Ken’s unparalleled knowledge of The Brinton’s history and collections is truly remarkable. We are committed to finding a Curatorial Director who can match his intelligence, passion and dedication to this institution. My three years working alongside Ken have been invaluable in understanding the museum’s mission and rich past.”

Schuster’s career in Wyoming began in 1982 as the Assistant Curator of Education for the University of Wyoming Art Museum where he dedicated seven years, culminating as the Curator of Education, before bringing his talents to The Brinton Museum.

In 1990, Schuster was appointed Director of the then Bradford Brinton Memorial, only the third person to hold the position since the museum’s inception in 1961. Over the course of his 34-year career, he steered the museum through transformative changes, ensuring its long-term sustainability and elevating the visitor experience.

In 2002, Schuster oversaw the expansion to the Bradford Brinton Memorial & Museum, which facilitated private fundraising and allowed for new acquisitions as an expansion to the memorial’s “frozen” collection. Then, in 2013, he oversaw the creation of the nonprofit entity, The Brinton Museum, which took over the trusteeship of the Bradford Brinton Memorial and further provided for expanded museum collections, fundraising opportunities and overall sustainability.

Throughout his tenure, Schuster was driven by an unwavering passion for The Brinton, its collections and American Western culture, fostering meaningful relationships with artists, historians, tribal partners, and patrons of the arts who have all contributed to the museum’s growth and prominence. Notable among these relationships were those with the late Forrest E. Mars, Jr., the museum’s largest benefactor and the late Father Peter Powell, a devoted ethnohistorian and author dedicated to Native American people. Together, they achieved a

significant milestone with the opening of the Forrest E. Mars, Jr. Building in 2015. Schuster worked closely with Mars and Powell to facilitate the donation of the Gallatin Collection, the centerpiece of the museum's "To Honor the Plains Nations" exhibition, and the construction of the Forrest E. Mars, Jr. Building, providing a fitting home for the Gallatin Collection.

The Brinton Museum Board of Directors extend their heartfelt congratulations to Schuster on his well-deserved retirement and thank him for his dedication to the museum. Sam Scott, Chair of The Brinton Museum Board of Directors, remarked, "As chair of the board and a long-standing member of The Brinton, I am immensely proud of the impact Ken has had on this institution. His storytelling and profound knowledge of not only the museum but also the region will be greatly missed. In anticipation of Ken's retirement, we've implemented a comprehensive succession plan, ensuring a seamless transition of leadership. Having worked closely with Kendra over the last three years, I have full confidence in her ability to build upon our past successes and leverage her strategic thinking and professionalism to navigate this period of transition."

The search for Schuster's successor as Curatorial Director is in progress. Barbara McNab, Curator of Exhibitions and a dedicated member of The Brinton Museum's staff for nearly a decade, will serve as Interim Curatorial Director until the position is filled.

Applications will be accepted until December 15, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. MST. The Brinton Museum aims to select the new Curatorial Director by March 1, 2024.

For more information about The Brinton Museum and the application process for the Curatorial Director position, please visit thebrintonmuseum.org.

Contact:

Kendra Heimbeck, Executive Director
kheimbeck@thebrintonmuseum.org
307-763-5928

About The Brinton Museum:

Founded in 1960, The Brinton Museum is a fine arts institution devoted to preserving the art and history of the West. Located on the historic Quarter Circle A Ranch in the foothills of the majestic Bighorn Mountains, it features 19th, 20th and 21st century American and Indian Art in a historic Western setting. The Brinton Museum is a participating member of the North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) Association which offers its members free admission during regular museum hours to other participating NARM institutions.

Hours: Open Thursday through Monday, 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

Admission for 2023 is offered free through a generous gift from Ramaco Carbon, LLC.

Telephone: 307-672-3173

Address: 239 Brinton Road, Big Horn, WY 82833

Mailing Address: PO Box 460, Big Horn, WY 82833

Web: www.thebrintonmuseum.org

##