

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Kiran Webster

During the 2016–2017 academic year, we hosted a variety of events at the Oriental Institute for our members, donors, and the general public. We celebrated our largest fundraising event, the biennial gala in addition to hosting the thirteenth year of our annual Postdoctoral Seminar, the fifth year of the annual David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series, and celebrated fifty years of our Volunteer Program. In addition, we continued to develop unique programming, hosting the Adler Planetarium Webster Institute members for our James Henry Breasted Society event at the Oriental Institute.

We would like to thank our generous donors and members, whose support make our exhibits, programming, research, and special events possible.

### 50th Anniversary of the Volunteer Program

This year, the Oriental Institute celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Volunteer Program on December 4, 2016. Volunteers, docents, and members from the last five decades attended



*50th Anniversary of the Volunteer Program, held on December 4, 2017 (photo: Joel Wintermantle)*



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to celebrate the accomplishments of the program and recognize Carlotta Maher and Jim Sopranos for their fifty years of service to the Oriental Institute Volunteer Program. Following the program, guests enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamia Gallery. A special bench donated by an anonymous supporter commemorating the fifty years was presented to the volunteers.

As one of the first volunteer programs in the City of Chicago, the Oriental Institute has made numerous achievements, including: the introduction of a professionalized docent program, which truly helped to make the museum's collection accessible to the public; the creation of an education department, for the first time offering courses and programs to adults, families, and K-12 age children; and the inception of the OI Travel Tour Program.

Special thanks goes to our 50th Anniversary Committee: Joan Barghusen, Gretel Braidwood, Catherine Dueñas, Margaret Foorman, Terry Friedman, Susan Geshwender, Deborah Halpern, Janet Helman, Carlotta Maher, and

Emily Teeter. We would also like to recognize the generous volunteers who contributed to the Volunteer Program and to a publication dedicated to highlights in the Museum's collection.

### **Thirteenth Annual Postdoctoral Seminar**

Postdoctoral fellow Ilona Zsolnay organized the thirteenth annual postdoctoral seminar, hosted at the Oriental Institute on March 2-3, 2017. This year's conference titled, *Seen Not Heard: Composition, Iconicity, and the Classifier Systems of Logosyllabic Scripts*, brought together domestic and international scholars to explore the various ways in which the earliest writing systems exploited visible language to express meaning beyond the spoken word. Conference speakers panelists received a curator-led tour of the Oriental Institute and attended a dinner hosted in the Director's Suite, former office of Oriental Institute founder James Henry Breasted. This provided the speakers and those participating in the conference with the opportunity to discuss their research with their colleagues. Each year these lectures, presented by experts on the conference topic, are free and open to our members and the public thanks to the generous support of Arthur and Lee Herbst. A publication of the conference proceedings is currently in production.

## James Henry Breasted Society Event: A Night of Astronomy, Astrology, and Magic

On the beautiful spring evening of April 13, 2017, the Adler Planetarium's Webster Institute members joined the Oriental Institute's James Henry Breasted Society members under a full moon to learn about astronomy, astrology, and magic in the ancient Near East within the galleries of the Oriental Institute. The attendees viewed artifacts presented by Research Associate Tasha Vorderstrasse, Assistant Professor John Wee, and Professor Robert Ritner. Members were able to see objects never before displayed in the museum's galleries, including cuneiform tablets recording astronomical observations, and learned how the Egyptians kept track of time using a water clock. James Henry Breasted Society and Webster Institute members received a detailed and in-depth look at specific artifacts in the Oriental Institute's collections and the celestial stories behind them. This event was made possible by the members of the James Henry Breasted Society who provide an annual, renewable source of unrestricted support for the most pressing research projects of the Oriental Institute.



*Assistant Professor John Wee discusses astronomical observations recorded on cuneiform tablets with James Henry Breasted Society Members at the Night of Astronomy, Astrology and Magic hosted at the Oriental Institute (photo: David Turner)*

## David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series

Matthew J. Adams, Director of the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, gave the fifth lecture in the annual David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series on April 26, 2017 entitled, *Armageddon and the Roman Vith Ferrata Legion: New Excavations at Legio, Israel*. Adams focused on excavations at the site of Legio, the Roman military base in Galilee, near Megiddo.

During a workshop, Adams met with graduate students from the Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Department, the Divinity School, and the Anthropology Department, as well as faculty and staff from the Oriental Institute, to discuss how new data and observations enable reinterpretations of monumental temples first unearthed by the Oriental Institute team in the early part of the twentieth century.

The David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series focuses on the history and archaeology of ancient Israel and was established through a generous gift from Barbara Kipper and the Kipper Family. The program includes an annual public lecture as well as a workshop for faculty, graduate, and undergraduate scholars at the Oriental Institute.



## 2017 Oriental Institute Gala: Bringing the Past to Light

The 2017 Oriental Institute Gala, *Bringing the Past to Light*, was held on May 18, 2017, at the Four Seasons Hotel Ballroom in Chicago. While enjoying cocktails and conversation in a suq-inspired lounge, guests bid on specially curated treasures, including an antique drafting table once used by museum staff, and a steamer trunk used by James Henry Breasted, Robert Braidwood, and Nelson Rockefeller.

As the doors opened to the ballroom, guests entered through domes of crimson into a softly lit ballroom. Director Gil Stein presented the James Henry Breasted Medallion, the Oriental Institute's highest honor, to Lewis and Misty Gruber for their leadership and volunteer service as Visiting



*Guests viewing silent auction items, including a trunk owned by James Henry Breasted (photo: John Zich)*



*Epigraphic Survey Field Director W. Ray Johnson (on left) speaking with 2015 Breasted Medallion recipient Thomas C. Heagy at the Gala (photo: John Zich)*



*Former Director of the Oriental Institute Gil J. Stein welcoming guests to the Oriental Institute 2017 Gala (photo: John Zich)*



*Misty and Lewis Gruber accepting Breasted Medallions for the 2017 Oriental Institute Gala (photo: John Zich)*



*Luis Vazquez and Abby Ellison perform a rendition of the Arabian Dance from the Nutcracker (photo: John Zich)*

Committee Members and for their outstanding support of the Oriental Institute and our mission. Following the presentation, guests were captivated by a modern dance rendition of the Arabian Dance from the Nutcracker, performed by Luis Vazquez and Abby Ellison.

Following the performance, guests bid on live auction items, which included pedestal cases original to the founding of the museum and a getaway to London with private tours of the British Museum and West End theater tickets.

The evening concluded in the lounge. Where guests dined, danced, and imbibed until late in the evening. We would like to thank all of our guests of and contributors to this fundraising event, which generated \$95,000 towards the Oriental Institute's Gallery Enhancements Project. We look forward to celebrating the completion of this project and our Centennial in 2019.

A special thank you goes to our Gala Advisory Committee: Andrea Dudek, Jill Carlotta Maher, Harvey Plotnick, Crennan Ray, and Rebecca Stein.

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