

## My Museum of World Treasures Story

By Sonja Vogt, Visitor Services Representative

I believe we will now think of our lives as *Before Coronavirus* and *After Coronavirus*. Unlike the death of John F. Kennedy and 9/11, we will not ask each other, **"Where were you when the virus hit?"** The ongoing nature of this beast puts it in an entirely different category. Our stories are yet to have that *After Coronavirus* element. So I'm going to tell my *Before Coronavirus* story and *During Coronavirus* story.

I was unemployed and had been for about two years. Previously I had worked in an IT support capacity for thirty years. Obviously, my life had changed considerably and I found myself a little lost, a little rootless, a little stuck. I felt a responsibility to work, a financial responsibility to my family, but also a responsibility that was more social and purposeful. I hadn't done much job searching. I felt like **my job had to be in just the right place, with just the right mission, and just the right people.** I thought, were it to be all those things, it would just drop serendipitously into my lap. Two years later...my lap was still empty. Apparently this was going to take a little more effort on my part.

One random day I decided to get serious about this job hunt. My theory this time was that I should specifically search for a job only at places I knew I would like to work. I didn't make a list. I just began. I would love to work among books so I checked the library's careers page. There was nothing part-time available. I would love to work in a museum. I Googled the Museum of World Treasures (MOWT), found their open positions, and almost fell over! A part-time position was available and my qualifications fit! This was the serendipity I was looking for. Before my position in Visitor Services came to fruition, I was prodded and encouraged by some incredibly special people. I applied. First, I received an email and then there was a phone call. Which led to an in-person meeting with Danielle Wetzel, Visitor



Services Director. I knew I was hooked and I hoped Danielle would be as well. The museum is full of things that I, as well as many others, think are the very fabric of our and our ancestors' lives. Everyone can find something to be passionate about here. From pre-historic to the Old West and everything in between there are so many treasures. I was sure this is where I wanted to be. Serendipity agreed and I was offered a position. I could begin the following week.

Now, we approach the *During the Coronavirus* period. My new boss, Danielle, and I worked out a couple of days for me to begin learning how to do my new job. Stephanie and Alyssa, my colleagues in the visitor center and gift shop, make everything look so easy, but I know there are a thousand things to learn. I was feeling very fortunate I would have these two women to help me navigate my way to being a productive member of the team. I had previously planned a vacation for the following week but was looking so forward to returning and beginning my tenure at the museum. Day two of training, Danielle returns from a meeting and says, while no one knows what this virus will bring we should all be prepared and consider our economic situation. The coronavirus had just begun to sneak into the United States at that time. I knew Danielle was right but I was just on the cusp of beginning a new employment story! I was definitely NOT ready to write The End.

I left for my vacation. One week. Seven days. Oh my, how the world has changed. The virus began spreading and the concern at first was about disrupting lives but it very quickly became about saving lives. By the time I returned to Wichita the museum had closed its doors in an effort to keep people safe and healthy. The president and CEO, Mike Noller, did not want to do anything that would contribute to the spread of the disease. In such a short time I've come to know the team that works to lovingly maintain, develop, and share this incredible treasure sitting in the middle of Wichita is all about the people. In this particular time it is important to protect everyone as much as possible by



encouraging the order to shelter at home. As a brand new member of the MOWT team I've also discovered that employees are valued and cared for here. I already know that if I need something these people, who may have met me only once, will do whatever they can to help. I feel the same way about them.

**Serendipity is a funny thing.** I guess sometimes you have to fish around for it but once you've hooked it and reeled it in you should do everything you can to enjoy it. No matter the circumstances.

Please plan to visit this special place as soon as we can all start our *After Coronavirus* story.

Written by

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