



**For Immediate Release**

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### **Birmingham Museum launches digital historic yearbook collection**

**BIRMINGHAM, MI**, January 4, 2024 — The Birmingham Museum has announced the launch of digital access to its historic Birmingham school yearbook collection with free online access to the 1919-1929 issues now available at [www.bhamgov.org/yearbooks](http://www.bhamgov.org/yearbooks). The digitization project has been underway for several months as part of the museum's effort to make the popular resource available and user-friendly.

"People have been waiting to see these fascinating peeks at the past. They give a sense of what it was like to go to school in Birmingham, what was on the students' minds, and how they viewed the world of the early twentieth century," said Museum Director Leslie Pielack. "Our historic yearbook collection is very popular among people of all ages, especially at this time of year when many of us are reminded of the importance of family and our personal roots and traditions."

The project is part of an overall initiative by the Birmingham Museum to make items of special interest to the public more accessible, and to utilize sustainable approaches such as digitization and online access to accomplish this. The museum's school yearbook collection was acquired over the last fifty years as donors have gifted copies that go back to 1919, the first yearbook issued by the recently built Birmingham High School. Yearbooks provide much essential information to genealogists, local historians, and families conducting personal research.

Individual issues were assessed for stability and preservation needs, and moisture-damaged or mold-affected issues needed management or removal before the digitization could be finalized. The museum used special book scanning equipment to protect the originals and create electronic files that were then converted to the most appropriate and accessible format for the material. The yearbooks range from under 100 pages to several hundred, depending on the year. The collection is fairly complete, with only a few issues missing from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 1980s. The Birmingham Museum will add to the online yearbook collection one decade at a time, and anticipates the full digitized collection being available at [www.bhamgov.org/yearbooks](http://www.bhamgov.org/yearbooks) over the next several months. "We made the individual yearbooks searchable so it is easier to find what patrons are looking for," said Justin Koch, a museum staff member who worked on the project. "But there are always challenges with captions and photos, so we suggest searching the index first for greatest accuracy," he said.

The museum will undergo a revision to its strategic plan over the next year, and sustainability and public access will continue to be part of its focus. To learn more about the museum, its mission, and to view its virtual exhibits and hear its podcasts, visit [www.bhamgov.org/museum](http://www.bhamgov.org/museum).

*The Birmingham Museum is open Tuesday – Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for students and seniors, and children 5 and under and Friends members are free. Questions? Contact the museum at 248-530-1928 or [museum@bhamgov.org](mailto:museum@bhamgov.org), or check us out on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/TheBirminghamMuseum/>), Instagram ([https://www.instagram.com/birmingham\\_museum\\_mj/](https://www.instagram.com/birmingham_museum_mj/)), or Twitter ([https://twitter.com/bham\\_museum](https://twitter.com/bham_museum)). More video content on our current exhibit, lectures on historic Birmingham, and educational video shorts for adults and children can be found on our YouTube channel. Want to know more about us? Check us out at [www.bhamgov.org/museum](http://www.bhamgov.org/museum). Or contact us by phone at 248-530-1928.*

*City of Birmingham – A Walkable Community. Visit the city's web site at [www.bhamgov.org](http://www.bhamgov.org).*

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