A non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that depends on your contributions to preserve mining’s heritage.
Gary Prazen, Renowned Sculptor and Supporter of the NMHFM, Has Passed Away

Gary Prazen’s work embodied the culture, folklore, and characters that make up the mining industry. Gary was a tremendous supporter of the NMHFM and many of his bronze miner tribute pieces can be viewed in the museum, including pieces he created especially for the museum.

Gary was involved with and supported the museum since the late 80s. In 1994, the museum purchased “Anatomy of a Miner.” This steel sculpture of a single jack miner graces the entrance to the National Mining Hall of Fame.

In 1995, Gary announced the Prazen Living Legend of Mining Award as a symbol of his appreciation for what the mining industry had meant to him. He created a 28-inch bronze statue of a miner to be presented each year in perpetuity by the NMHFM to recognize significant contributions to greater understandings of the mining industry. The first Prazen statue was awarded that year at the 8th Annual Induction Banquet to the Colorado School of Mines for their summer field course for high school teachers. This continues to be awarded each year at the annual induction banquet. Later, Gary also began providing the “Leadville Miner” statue to the NMHFM to present to the keynote speaker of induction banquets at which the Prazen Living Legend of Mining Award is presented.

Additionally, Gary, along with local craftsman Bruce Bartik, was instrumental in the design and installation of our 1800s underground coal mine replica. He also contributed several of the mannequins in the hard rock mine replica.

In 2008, Gary presented former director Dick Moolick with his creation of an ornery miner’s mule entitled “Kick’n Ass” for Dick’s leadership and determination in shaping the NMHFM, which Gary considered to be “One of the finest museums in the Western US.”

Gary is as responsible as Dick Moolick for the great museum we have today. He was passionate about preserving mining history and did so through his art. His pieces captured the toughness of the miner and honored the miner’s role and sacrifices in building our country. Gary’s legacy of honoring and remembering the miners will live on at the NMHFM.

Dr. Siegfried Muessig

Dr. Siegfried (Sig) Muessig was born in Freiburg, Germany and came to the USA as a child. Sig served as a WWII B-29 pilot/flight engineer. After receiving his PhD in Geology from Ohio State University, his early professional years were with the Mineral Deposits Branch of the U.S. Geological Survey. He worked in the mid-continent, the Mojave Desert, South America, and the Republic Mining District (Washington). In 1959 he left the USGS to organize and staff an exploration group at U. S. Borax and then in 1986 he began an eighteen-year career with Getty Oil as Vice President, Exploration and International Mining, where he also organized and staffed a new minerals group. While at Getty, Sig actively participated in discovered the Escondida and Zaldivar copper deposits in Chile; Jubiluka uranium deposit in Australia; Mercur gold deposit in Utah; and Casa Grande copper deposit in Arizona. He also revitalized the Petrosomics uranium mine in Wyoming and tripled its production; he initiated the Tidal Diamonds marine mine in Namibia; and discovered other substantial uranium and copper, zinc and lead deposits. He built Getty Exploration into a respected and highly successful discovery team with a formidable reputation as a finder of ore. An industry-wide study by the Boston Consulting Group stated: “...in its brief eighteen-year existence Getty Mining became the world’s most successful explorer.” After Getty was purchased and dissolved by Texaco, Sig organized and operated the Crystal Exploration diamond program in a joint venture with Ashton Mining and Dow Chemical and consulted internationally until 2007.

As a recognized leader in exploration, Sig was a valuable addition to the Board of Governors and used his expertise in the area while reviewing nominations to emphasize exploration and its leading practitioners to the NMHF Board of Governors for its consideration and action.

The retiring board of governors were presented with a Leadville Miner statue inscribed: DISTINGUISHED MINER - With Grateful Appreciation for Dedication, Leadership, & Service.

Gary Goldberg, Tom Falkie, Stan Dempsey and Frank McAllister

Frank McAllister, Board Chair, presenting the Leadville Miner Statue
Retiring Board of Governors members recognized

Stanley Dempsey - 18 years of service beginning in 1998

Stan received a Geology degree from the University of Colorado in 1960 and went on to join Climax working in various capacities in engineering, legal, operating and executive positions, including Vice President of AMAX Inc. and Senior VP of Climax Molybdenum Company. Later, he worked with the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation as a research analyst while pursuing a law degree, which he also earned from the University of Colorado in 1964. Stan practiced law for several years as a partner in the firm Arnold & Porter handling mining transactions and public lands work before he went on to develop Royal Gold under a business model he created for acquiring and managing royalties of gold properties operated by major mining firms.

Stan attended the first meetings held by the organizers in the late 1960s and stayed active in the planning committee meeting through the 70s. Stan did the legal work on the initial set of by-laws, and to obtain the IRS 501(c)3 approval. Additionally, Stan was directly responsible for recruiting Dick Moolick to become involved in the NMHFM. Stan observes: “Once Dick joined the NMHF board his interest escalated and he provided incredible energy, securing the building in Leadville and “making it all happen.” Stan has been involved with the NMHFM in some capacity for the last four decades.

Thomas Falkie - 27 years of service beginning in 1989

Tom earned BS, MS, and PhD degrees from Penn State. He was a pioneer in the use of computers and operations research in mine planning. His expertise includes: corporate management, natural resource management, R & D, mineral engineering education, national mineral and energy policy, compensation matters, and operations. Tom joined International Minerals and Chemical and served in various engineering and management positions in its headquarters and Florida phosphate operations. He moved to Professor and Head of the Mineral Engineering and Mineral Engineering Management programs at Penn State. From 1974 until 1977 he served as Head of the US Bureau of Mines. He then went on to join Bestwind Natural Resources Corp as President and CEO and retired from there.

Tom began his service on the Board of Governors in 1989 and became the Chairman of the Board of Governors in 1993, succeeding ASARCO’s Simon Strauss, who had served as the Board of Governors’ first Chairman. According to Tom, Dick Moolick, Simon Strauss, Lane White, and Stan Dempsey got him interested in the Hall. Tom believes the mining industry has played a major role in the development of our country and will continue to do so. Tom believes leaders of the industry deserve to be recognized for their roles in this effort, thus his dedicated service to the NMHF.

Harrison Schmitt - 27 years of service beginning in 1989

In December 1972, as one of the crew on board Apollo 17, Harrison became the first member of NASA’s first scientist-astronaut group to fly in space, and the 12th person to set foot on the Moon. Harrison remains the first and only professional geologist to have flown low Earth orbit and visited the Moon. He was influential within the community of geologists supporting the Apollo program and, before starting his own preparations for an Apollo mission, had been one of the scientists training the Apollo astronauts chosen to visit the lunar surface. Harrison resigned from NASA in August 1975. He served one term as a US Senator for New Mexico and is now an Adjunct Professor of Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison, teaching “Resources from Space.” He is on the staff of the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition of Pensacola, Florida.

Curator’s News

We were super busy last summer in the curatorial department and accomplished great things; thanks to the help from summer interns Amy Nittias and Jacqueline George. We took down our first temporary exhibit, Eat, Sleep, Mine, to make way for Appalachia USA. We installed and participated in the Beyond the Mines exhibit at DIA and began renovations for the new Coal Exhibit, and finally did some re-organizing of the art featured around the museum. Builder Levy: Appalachia USA opened with a happy hour reception on September 8th, 2016, and was on view until January 2nd, 2017. Appalachia USA is the culmination of Builder Levy’s efforts to photograph life and labor in the coalfields and rural mountain mining communities of the southeastern U.S. Spanning four decades, these photographs record the artist’s exploration of this quintessentially American region, known both for picturesque splendor and historical poverty. Levy’s photographs challenge prejudices and point to a diverse people with a proud culture and a tradition of social engagement and struggle to improve their lives.

Our visitors had great things to say about this exhibition; Emilia W. wrote in the comment book, “Absolutely beautiful, harrowing, and haunting; this exhibit moved me, educated me, and left me more in touch with, not only the history of mining, but also the magic of the human condition. Thank you.”

Check out the Denver Westword article on the exhibit as well: http://www.westword.com/event/builder-levy-appalachia-usa-8369915

Our new temporary exhibit will be On Site: Men of Mining. You can learn more about it at https://www.mininghalloffame.org/news-item/artist-be-house-open-new-temporary-exhibit

Check our website for upcoming events:

Wine at the Mine 2017: Chocolate, Wine and Beer Tasting Event
February 17th, 2017.
The 29th Annual National Mining Hall of Fame Induction Banquet was held on September 24th in the beautiful Octavius ballroom at Caesar's Palace. Gary J. Goldberg, President & CEO of Newmont Mining, was our host for the evening. His charm honored the seriousness of the evening while his quick wit kept the evening light and fun.

Mr. Goldberg was joined on stage by Devon Hartmann, regional representative for Nevada Senator Dean Heller. After Gary presented inductees Stanley Dempsey, Dr. Haydn Murray, William Poundstone, and Robert Shoemaker with their hall of fame plaques, Ms. Hartmann presented the inductees with a certificate of appreciation from Senator Heller recognizing the life’s work of these gentlemen. She also presented such a certificate to the founders of the Women’s Mining Coalition, Kathleen Bennettdott, Ruth Carrasher, and Debra Struhlsasser, as the Praise Living Legend of Mining Award honorees. Nevada’s Governor Sandoval also recognized the women for their incredible work on behalf of the mining industry, while Governor Hickenlooper of Colorado declared September 24th Stan Dempsey Day!

New to the banquet this year were inductee and Prazen videos. Each video was about 5 minutes long and featured highlights from the careers of the honorees. The videos can be viewed on YouTube:

Stanley Dempsey at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W74sOA4s5SY

Dr. Haydn Murray at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33umDIO00c

William Poundstone at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuoO5TQyaC

Robert Shoemaker at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uo-wFIXxjSY

Women’s Mining Coalition at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keooqL0Pao

In addition to our honorees, other special guests included Phillips S. Baker, President & CEO of Hecla Mining, Brian and Yolanda Busse of The Weather Channel’s “The Prospectors” fame, Becky Bays & Susan Mawson of The Canadian Mining Hall of Fame and students from Colorado School of Mines, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, University of Arizona Department of Mining & Geological Engineering, and University of Utah Department of Mining Engineering.

More event photos can be viewed at www.mininghalloffame.org/news-and-events

Thank you to our sponsors and contributors! Your generosity made the 29th Annual Induction Banquet a gala event to remember for our honorees and their families and friends! Please accept our sincerest apologies if we have inadvertently left anyone out!

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