

milwaukee journal sentinel

LAND AND SPACE

Public Museum gets \$2 million from Herb Kohl Philanthropies for education fund, new facility



Tom Daykin

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

April 30, 2024, 11:08 a.m. CT

The Milwaukee Public Museum has announced another major gift to help finance its new facility: \$2 million from the late [Herb Kohl's foundation](#).

Part of that donation will create the Herb Kohl Education Fund. It will provide Wisconsin educators with free memberships to the future museum for its first three years.

Kohl, a philanthropist, longtime Milwaukee Bucks owner and former U.S. senator, "left behind a powerful legacy in Wisconsin, including his commitment to education, especially for teachers who help young people discover the true joy of learning," said Herb Kohl Philanthropies President and Chief Executive Officer JoAnne Anton.

"As we approach Teacher Appreciation Week, May 5 through 11, we are proud to provide a gift that will ensure our educators have the tools and the access they need to leverage the valuable resources the future museum will offer," Anton said, in a statement.

The fund also will create opportunities for educators to connect with the museum and "explore how its educational offerings can be maximized as a resource for students from all over Wisconsin," according to the Tuesday announcement.

Looking for a free mini puzzle? [Play the USA TODAY Quick Cross now.](#)

“I firmly believe the museum’s collaboration with educators across the state is essential to fulfilling our mission of inspiring curiosity, exciting minds and increasing desire to preserve and protect our world's natural and cultural diversity,” said MPM President and CEO Ellen Censky.

The gift is part of \$80 million in private donations which the museum so far has raised. The museum is seeking \$150 million in private donations sought for the \$240 million project.

Along with \$45 million from Milwaukee County and \$40 million from the state, the museum is seeking \$5 million in federal grants.

The goal is to raise \$108 million of the \$150 million in private funds by the project's groundbreaking. That includes donations for the museum's endowment, which wouldn't be used for building the new facility at West McKinley Avenue and North Sixth Street.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new museum is planned for May with a planned major construction start this summer, Censky told members of the County Board's Committee on Parks and Culture [in March](#).

The cost of designing and constructing the new museum and its exhibits is estimated at \$200 million. Additional costs include \$20 million for [the museum's endowment](#) and \$20 million to move the collections.

The current museum, which opened in 1963 at 800 W. Wells St., is too large, inefficient and affected by years of deferred maintenance, according to museum officials.

Tom Daykin can be emailed at tdaykin@jrn.com and followed on [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [Facebook](#).