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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Museum of Natural History Presents 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Legacy Awards

*Honoring Mr. & Mrs. Raymond King Myerson and Bart Francis*

**Santa Barbara, California (January 22, 2019)** — The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History hosted its Leadership Circles of Giving dinner on Thursday, January 17 in Fleischmann Auditorium. The annual event recognized the generosity of Leadership Circles Members and key donors who contributed to the success of the 2018 year. Catered by Chef Pete Clements, the décor included fossil centerpieces dating back 345 million years ago.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Legacy Awards. The Museum's Legacy Award was created in 2010 by the Board of Trustees. It recognizes extraordinary contributions by community supporters, donors, and volunteers who have made the Museum the exceptional and beloved institution it is today. This year the awards were presented to Mr. and Mrs. Raymond King Myerson and Bart Francis.

Mr. and Mrs. Myerson have been actively involved in supporting the Museum since the late Raymond King Myerson joined the Board of Trustees in 1975. Mr. Myerson served as a trusted financial advisor until 2000, and the couple's sustained generosity has supported the American Indian Basketry exhibit in Fleischmann Auditorium and the touch pools at the Sea Center, among other exhibits. In accepting the Legacy Award, Mrs. Myerson expressed her appreciation while stressing the importance of humility, pride, and gratitude. Bart Francis, a docent at the Museum for 22 years, was honored for his unique ability to connect to schoolchildren and inspire their love for nature and the outdoors. By tailoring his school field trip presentations to the students' interests, he is able to better engage them and ensure that their visit to the Museum has a lasting impact.

The dinner was the last event to be held in Fleischmann Auditorium before extensive renovations begin. Since its completion in 1938, Fleischmann Auditorium has become one of the most used spaces on the Museum campus, seating up to 340 people for dozens of lectures, special events, dinners, and public gatherings. The auditorium is booked by community organizations multiple times a month throughout the year, and is frequently rented for private events such as wedding receptions and graduation ceremonies. It also serves as the neighborhood polling station and the venue for science-based traveling exhibits.

While small upgrades have been made to improve the functionality of the building over the decades, the auditorium has never been modified in a way that would detract from its original architectural and aesthetic grace. The building is fundamentally sound and the Museum remains committed to preserving the look and feel of this wonderful space. However, the facility is in need of a top-to-bottom revitalization to both increase visitor comfort and improve the functionality of the venue for its many and varied uses. The renovations will provide temperature control, energy efficiency, aesthetic and acoustical improvements, improved access for guests with disabilities, and a restored roof. The Museum anticipates the project to be completed in November 2019.

Thanks to incredible community support, the Museum is well on its way to meeting its fundraising goal for the \$2.1 million project, having already secured \$1.7 million. For more information or to contribute to this worthy community project, please visit [campaign.sbnature.org](http://campaign.sbnature.org).

### About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

*Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature.* Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being *naturally different*. For more information, visit [www.sbnature.org](http://www.sbnature.org).

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(Left to right) Mrs. Raymond King Meyerson with Immediate Past Chair, Board of Trustees Bobbie Kinnear



(Left to right) Student & Teacher Services Manager Kristen Carté-Smith, Docent Bart Francis, Director of Education Justin Canty and Secretary, Board of Trustees Elaine Gibson

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Fleischmann Auditorium, built in 1938, will undergo extensive renovations in 2019.

*Photos by Baron Spafford Photography  
High-resolution images available upon request.*