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Gilcrease Museum Takes Next Step in Construction of New Building, Announces July 5 Closing Date

TULSA, Okla. – Gilcrease Museum will close its doors at end of day July 4 as the City of Tulsa prepares to demolish the current structure and begin construction of a new museum on the same site five minutes from downtown.

The current museum structure – a collection of several aging buildings pieced together over many decades – is scheduled to be demolished later this year. Construction of a new structure that can better protect the \$2 billion collection and deliver a 21st century visitor experience to Gilcrease visitors will begin in early 2022 and is expected to take 2-3 years.

“We’re excited about this next step toward building the new museum. The structure and its galleries will provide great new experiences for Tulsans and the entire region as well as a much safer environment to protect Tulsa’s asset,” said Gilcrease Museum Executive Director Susan Neal. “The new building will integrate its beautiful setting into the visitor experience. And even though our doors won’t be open during construction, Gilcrease will continue to serve the community by offering various programs online and in locations throughout the city in partnership with many local and regional organizations.”

“The citizens of Tulsa own one of the world’s greatest collections of American art and history at Gilcrease Museum. Now, we are going to build a museum facility worthy of that collection – a museum that has more space to showcase our world-class collection while also serving as the only facility in the state capable of housing major traveling exhibitions,” Mayor G.T. Bynum said. “Building the new museum necessarily requires closing the old building. But the short-term inconvenience of a closed museum will be worth it for generations to come when the new museum opens.”

Before the museum closes July 5, Neal said Gilcrease has planned a busy schedule of events and exhibitions for the community:

- Gilcrease is currently offering its Music on the Porch live music series every Thursday night from 5-8 p.m. on the porch of the Gilcrease house through June 24. The socially distanced events feature food truck fare, beer and wine cash bar, outdoor family activities and timed admission to the museum’s galleries. (Tickets are limited and advanced registration is required. Visit gilcrease.org for tickets and information.)

- Several special events for museum members will be announced in the coming months through closing.
- A special document exhibition featuring Gilcrease's copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation is also scheduled to open in mid-June through July 4. Assignment Tulsa, a photography exhibition highlighting the works of Tulsa photographers, is currently on view through close.

"We're also planning some special ways for Tulsans to share their memories of the current museum," added Neal. "Gilcrease holds a special memory for many in our community, whether it was their first trip to a museum as a child or their wedding day. We intend to commemorate those moments, and we encourage people to come visit the building one last time before we launch a new chapter in the life of this important Tulsa treasure."

Neal said the City, in coordination with the design team and museum staff, is finalizing preliminary designs and interpretive plan for the new Gilcrease and will share architectural renderings of the building and galleries later this summer.

Gilcrease Museum was established by Tulsa oilman Thomas Gilcrease in 1949 as a private museum and built on the site of Gilcrease's personal home northwest of Tulsa. The City of Tulsa took ownership of the museum and its collection in the 1950s.

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About Gilcrease Museum

The Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, commonly known as Gilcrease Museum, has a collection of American art, archive and anthropology collections as deep and broad as the American experience, including an unparalleled collection of Native American art and material culture. The Helmerich Center for American Research on the museum's campus houses a rare and important archival collection that Thomas Gilcrease amassed. Through its collection, Gilcrease Museum is dedicated to service through bringing art, history and people together to research, discover, enjoy and understand the diverse heritage of the Americas.

Additionally, the museum is embarking on an \$83 million construction project as a result of the 2016 Vision Tulsa package. This historic project will result in a dynamic new facility for the museum, making it a premier destination and tourist attraction. The museum is owned by the City of Tulsa, which has partnered with The University of Tulsa to steward the museum. To learn more and view the current exhibition schedule, please visit gilcrease.org.