

26 March 1986

Mr. Don Otto, Director
The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History
1501 Montgomery Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Dear Don:

By the time you read this letter I imagine that either Ralph or I will have spoken to you about arranging a meeting to bring us all up to date concerning any progress made toward raising funds for the museum to purchase our collection of Texas bird paintings. Now that two months have passed since our exhibition opened at the museum I have had an opportunity to observe how the organization of the fund-raising project has operated. I think the time has come to make some changes which will make the project more efficient and ease the burden that it may have placed on museum personnel, allowing them to pursue their other fund-raising activities.

First of all, I think that this project is suffering from a lack of efficient coordination and communication among the people concerned. This is primarily due to the fact that Anne Tinsley, Roby Penn, Cornelia Blake, Ralph Carr and you and I are very busy people with many other activities and responsibilities to attend to and with limited time in which to do them. Thus it is very seldom that all of us are able to get together at one time to discuss problems and plan strategy. Because Anne Tinsley is the primary fund-raising coordinator for every important project which the museum is undertaking, her time and attention must necessarily be divided. When dealing with a prospective donor I imagine that she must have to decide which of the museum's many needs ought to be addressed first. Since I personally think that class rooms, teaching equipment and renovation costs should rate higher on the scale of an institution's priorities than a collection of bird paintings, I believe that our project is bound to suffer when the time comes to approach donors. I do not think that this has to be so. Having been involved with many institutional fund-raising activities in the past, I appreciate the realities of competition, but I really would like to have a better chance to compete. This may be difficult because of the current structure of our fund-raising committee.

Another matter that we should talk about concerns that aspect of the collection that is bound up with our business relationship to the Camp Bowie National

Bank. As you know the bank granted us a loan of \$300,000 to publish our book, OF BIRDS AND TEXAS, using the paintings of the birds as collateral. It was the interest in purchasing the bird paintings shown by the museum's Board of Directors that encouraged the bank to grant us the loan in the first place. Though the museum has eight years in which to purchase the collection, it is in the best interests of everybody that the money be raised as soon as possible -- to cut down on our substantial financing costs and to free the lien which has been placed on the collection. I have a few suggestions which might make the fund-raising process easier and more efficient and allow the people concerned to make a better use of their valuable time.

I.) The primary decision-making and authority for running the day-to-day aspects of collecting donations, seeking and dealing with prospective donors should be mine. I should then be answerable directly to you.

II.) All dealings between the museum and the bank concerning the Gentling bird painting collection should be coordinated by me or my agent.

III.) When possible donors who contact the museum concerning the bird collection should be encouraged to talk to me or my agent, Ralph Carr.

IV.) All donations should be made payable to the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History if collected by me or my agent and be given to the Museum.

V.) All such payments received by the museum should be forwarded to the Bowie Bank within two weeks of their receipt by the Museum.

VI.) I should be notified of all new donations as soon as possible.

VII.) I should be informed of any donations which will be in the form of extended payments.

VIII.) There should be a meeting at the museum with the people concerned during the first week of every month to assess the progress of the project, to coordinate the lists of donors and to correct any problems which may have arisen in the course of the project.

Most fund-raising projects, as you know, succeed by creating an interest among the public and by maintaining a certain momentum of enthusiasm. Our project began with a very successful opening at the museum which generated a great deal of good will and enthusiasm, but I think that this early momentum has been dissipated through conflicting commitments, lack of coordination and following up with potential donors who have already expressed an interest. I

believe that by concentrating the daily management of this project into my hands, and under my authority with me being answerable only to you, Don, we will be much more successful in expediting this fund-raising process. The past experience of both Ralph and myself will, I think, assure that each donor will be handled with consideration and discretion and with good taste, and that we will better be able to satisfy the interests of the donors, the Museum of Science and History, the Camp Bowie National Bank and ourselves by such a re-organization. I hope to get together soon to discuss all this.

Sincerely yours,

Stuart W. Gentling