

By Natalie Taylor and Shirley Gaudette

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The Heinz History Center's membership program is one of the cornerstones of its success. Members provide vital support to the History Center's exciting exhibition and programs schedule, its award-winning publications, and field trips for more than 35,000 school children each year.

Bob Butella and Sue Weingold joined the History Center as members in 2010 and are now members at the Benefactor level. Bob says, "We became members when we learned how many significant historical presentations had already been done and the other presentations, exhibits, and events that occur at the History Center and we didn't want to miss any more of them."

Sue says that the special events are their favorite aspect: "We love receiving the

invitations to the members-only events to see the new exhibits, and we respond immediately and change our schedules so we attend almost every one of them." Some of the events they have attended included a beer tasting for a Benjamin Franklin exhibition and a barbeque for the opening of *The Story of Negro League Baseball: We Are the Ship*.

Bob adds, "*The Story of the Negro League Baseball* was magnificent. We learned how important the Negro league was to this area and the many outstanding players that were in the league. This presentation coincided with a members' field trip to PNC Park, where we saw the special area and theater dedicated to the Negro teams and players. We were in awe and developed a respect for the life and sport of baseball that existed in the African American community at that time in history. Every time we

drive across the Homestead Gray's Bridge and see the names of the players on the banners, we think of this member event."

Bob and Sue—both lifelong Pittsburghers—also enjoy visiting the other sites in the History Center's museum system. Sue says, "The Fort Pitt Museum was something we never experienced until we had our History Center membership. It's a community treasure and we still recall the members-only event where we learned about and saw the skills of the craftsman who make the clothes and the historical figures for the displays. It was great to see, to learn, and to begin to appreciate all of the wonderful people across the History Center who make history come alive for the members."

Because membership includes unlimited admission to the History Center, the Fort Pitt Museum, and Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, Bob and Sue are able to visit often, especially Meadowcroft, where they can experience their favorite part of history. Bob says, "We really appreciate seeing how diligent and careful the very early settlers and native inhabitants were in having communities and organization to make sure they had food, shelter, and protection from the hazards of living in the wild. We have it so easy compared to their way of life and it helps us appreciate everything we have today."

The History Center is very fortunate to have members like Bob, Sue, and people like you. Membership makes a great gift, as well. To give the gift of history or upgrade your membership, visit www.heinzhistorycenter.org or contact Shirley Gaudette, Membership Manager, at sagaudette@heinzhistorycenter.org or (412) 454- 6436.

