

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Andrew E. Masich  
President & CEO



Let's face it—since Macy's closed its downtown doors in 2015, Christmas in Pittsburgh just hasn't been the same.

After all, for more than 80 years, families lined up three- and four-rows deep to catch a glimpse of the magical window displays outside of Kaufmann's and Macy's department store at Christmastime.

Even before there was Macy's, Western

Pennsylvanians came from all around to see those unforgettable animated displays and to shop for loved ones at downtown Pittsburgh's signature department stores such as Kaufmann's, Joseph Horne Company, and Gimbel Brothers.

This tradition emerged in the late 1800s and blossomed during the early 20th century, when the use of electric lights and new ideas about merchandising inspired American department stores to make holiday shopping more of an experience for its customers.

At Kaufmann's then Macy's (after 2005), it wasn't just the animated window displays that drew in shoppers from around the region. The store's popular Santaland section was a winter wonderland that featured vibrant Christmas décor fit for the North Pole. And of course, Santa Claus served as the star attraction for children itching to reveal their wish list and share if they'd been "naughty or nice."

This Christmas, we will do our best to fill some of the void left by the closed department stores with an exciting new holiday-themed experience, *A Very Merry Pittsburgh*. The centerpiece of this holly jolly display will be objects from the History Center's Macy's/Kaufmann's collection, including original items from Santaland.

And we couldn't evoke the North Pole-feel of Santaland without the big guy in red, so each day through Christmas Eve, you can bring your family to the museum to take photos with Santa, who will be perched in an exact replica of the Kaufmann's Santa chair.

We see *A Very Merry Pittsburgh* as the perfect nostalgic complement to the many wonderful holiday attractions at cultural institutions around Pittsburgh. We hope you and your family will begin a new tradition at the History Center during Christmastime this year.



## Horne's Department Store decorated for Christmas, 1948.

HMC Detre L&A, gift of Federated Department Stores, Inc. Lazarus Division, David L. Avetta, MSP 0398.



**Macy's Christmas window display on Light Up Night, 2013.**

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**Robert Jamison of Etna (playing Santa since he was 18 years old) started at Horne's as well as Kaufmann's and Macy's.**

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