



Delaware Humanities
DEstination: Space
2020 Schwartz Prize Nomination

Nominating Statement

Most people in the United States know that 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the historic Moon landing. The event is still in the living memory of many, and the learned memory of those born after 1969. What most people do not know is that the Apollo spacesuits were made in Delaware, as were other important pieces of technology necessary to reach the Moon. Delaware Humanities' project, *DEstination: Space*, brought together individuals and organizations to discuss, through the lens of Delaware's contributions to exploring outer space, where we've been and where we are going as a society, which is why we are nominating this project for the 2020 Schwartz Prize.

Brief Program Description

Through a traveling exhibit, book discussions, lectures, website, partner events, and re-grants, Delaware Humanities helped create a statewide initiative to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing, and use the anniversary as a catalyst to discuss who we are, where we've been, and where we are going as a society in relation to science and technology.

Project Aims

The goals of *DEstination: Space* were:

- To teach about the history of the Moon landing and to raise awareness of Delaware's past, present, and future in space exploration
- To bring together the community and spark conversations and partnerships between science-based and humanities-based organizations and individuals
- To reach new and diverse audiences

Project Format

Exhibit

All parts of the project revolved around an exhibit about Delaware's past, present, and future contributions to space exploration designed to travel throughout the state. The exhibit consisted of ten panels, and progressed from early astronomical research and astronomers in Delaware, to the products made in Delaware which allowed for space exploration from Apollo to the Space Shuttle program, then finally to the future of exploration. A concluding panel identified the special place the humanities have in both inspiring and reflecting on space exploration and advances made through technology.

Two copies of the exhibit were printed, with one being for long-term venues and the other being for short-term venues. Both copies of the exhibit were printed on roll up banners so they could stand alone and be easy to transport. The long-term exhibit was hosted at eight venues, with each host displaying the exhibit for one to two months. In addition, the short-term exhibit was displayed at eight different venues for one to two weeks. Venues, among them libraries, colleges, and museums in all three counties of the state, actively participated. The exhibit even figured prominently in anniversary commemorations at both ILC Dover (the company which made the spacesuits) and W.L. Gore & Associates (the company which made the cabling in the Lunar Module and the seismographic research equipment on Apollo 11). The exhibit ran from April to December 2019. After its run, one copy of the exhibit was given to the Delaware Aerospace Education Foundation for permanent display.

All research and writing for the Delaware Humanities exhibit was conducted in house, and with editing and fact checking completed by outside historians. The exhibit and the website were designed by Delaware Designs, a local graphic design company, and printed by Alpaca, a local print company.

Lectures

Two lectures were held as part of *DEstination: Space*. The first was in March 2019 by spacesuit historian Dr. Doug Lantry, who received his Ph.D. from the University of Delaware. The lecture was held in partnership with the Hagley Museum and Library. Dr. Lantry discussed the history

of the Apollo suits' fabrication and the two Delaware companies involved (mainly ILC Dover for the design/creation and DuPont for the fabrics).

The second lecture was our Annual Lecture in October 2019 with Astronaut Leland Melvin. Melvin flew twice on the International Space Station and had to overcome many obstacles to do so. A former NFL player, Melvin discussed the injury which forced him to leave football; being a minority in higher education, the sciences, and NASA; and another injury which almost barred him from becoming an astronaut. His story resonated with adults and children alike, making our audience for this lecture one of our most diverse in many years. This event was held in partnership with the HBCU Delaware State University and Delaware Humanities provided buses for the One Village Alliance, a minority mentoring and education non-profit, to bring families from Wilmington to Dover for the lecture.

Book Discussions

Astronaut Melvin wrote an autobiographical book, *Chasing Space*, and in preparation for his lecture four libraries held discussion groups for his book. *Chasing Space* was also published in a Young Adult version, and one of these discussion groups was for teenagers.

Delaware Humanities' long running Literature and Medicine discussion group program also intersected with the project, with their final book for the year being *Moments in Silence*. By Buzz Aldrin, this book discusses the Moon Landing, but also his struggles with addiction and bipolar disorder. In addition to our two Literature and Medicine groups receiving this book for discussion, a group discussion for the general public on this book was held at the New Castle Library.

Essay Contest

Partnering with the Delaware Art Museum via their annual Writers' Festival, Delaware Humanities hosted an essay contest where students could answer one of two prompts: (1) Delaware is one of the few states which lost its moon rock from the Apollo 11 mission. What happened to it? or (2) The year is 2030, and the first manned mission is set to launch for Mars. Students in Middle School or High School could enter, and the first three places in the Middle School and High School categories received a prize and a private meeting with Leland Melvin before the lecture. Winners also presented their essays at the Writer's Festival.

Oral History Workshop

Many of our partner organizations for *DEstination: Space* indicated an interest in gathering oral histories of those who were alive during the Moon Landing. In partnership with the University of Delaware and the Wilmington Public Library, we hosted an oral history workshop to teach people those skills, and the workshop was simulcast to two other libraries in the state's other two counties to reach the widest audience as possible.

Podcast Episode

As part of Democracy and the Informed Citizen, Delaware Humanities received a grant to produce a podcast which used specific topics to analyze sources of information and to help listeners discern for themselves how to determine the reliability of sources. In one episode we interviewed renowned space historian Dr. John Logsdon. In the episode he put the space landing into the context of the Cold War and explained that any source of information is largely dependent on its surrounding context. He also discussed the lack of credible evidence for the Moon Landing being a hoax.

Website

With Delaware Design, Delaware Humanities created a website for this initiative. On it, we posted information about the exhibit, our events, and partners' events related to the initiative. We also curated resources for librarians, educators, and the general public who wished to learn more or host their own programs for the anniversary.

Re-grants

Our re-grants program was part of the initiative with *Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead* themed grants. These re-grants were for up to \$5,000 and awarded on a rolling basis for projects which explored how science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and the arts and humanities (S.T.E.A.M.) have shaped Delaware and Delawareans.

From this, we funded the documentary *Delaware: To the Moon*, which examined DuPont, ILC Dover, and W.L. Gore & Associates and their contributions to space exploration. A series of oral histories with those who worked for these companies during the Apollo program (or their immediate relatives were employed by these companies—for example, an interview was captured with Wilbert Lee Gore's daughter) was also funded through this initiative.

The Delaware Children's Museum hosted an educational "Exploring Space Night" for families to teach children about space and the solar system. During craft time, the children were able to build their own rocket ships.

Partner Events

Every organization which hosted the exhibit *DEstination: Space* was required to host at least one event. This encouraged many of them to work with individuals and organizations they had never before. The programs included story and craft time for children, lectures, first-person interpretations, book discussions, panel discussions, spacesuit presentations, two space festivals, an astronaut boot camp, the use of VR, and even the unique creation of a VR experience that put the user on the moon and pointed out all the equipment with a Delaware connection.

Our partners went above and beyond, showing great creativity and willingness to seek out and partner with companies, actors, and science agencies.

Project Impact

Sustainability

For Delaware Humanities, this was our first large-scale comprehensive themed initiative. We brought most of our programming together (Literature and Medicine, our podcast, the Annual Lecture) and linked it with a common thread. This made our programming and offerings cohesive and unified and has become a helpful model for us moving forward. Overall, this project taught us sustainable ways to conduct programming through thematic strategies and partnerships.

Public

In general, our audiences tend to be white, female, and middle aged to senior citizens. *Destination: Space* attracted more families, men, younger individuals, and minorities. Our audience expanded through this programming and introduced a younger generation to the humanities. We were also able to show the importance of the humanities and the necessity of its presence in discussions about technology and anything which impacts the human condition.

Overall, the exhibit reached over 80,000 people across the state of Delaware, with programming related to the initiative reaching over 2,600 people.

Some audience responses to our programming:

"Giving information to people who are interested and willing empowers them to take ownership and get involved. You don't have to be an historian or a librarian necessarily to take an active role, and I think it's important that the state (libraries, DNREC, SHPO, HCA, etc) work to bring different perspectives forward and get people involved, and this program is a great example of that! :)" *Oral History Workshop*

"Very well designed with a good flow of information, good connection between technical subjects and the humanities." *Destination: Space Exhibit*

"So interesting to learn new things particularly relevant locally". *Doug Lantry Lecture*

"Wonderful lecture. Glad to see mixed generational participants. [Events like this are] part of our continued education and experience to maintain our humanity." *Leland Melvin Lecture*

Partnerships

Through this initiative, Delaware Humanities expanded our partnerships and also encouraged our partners to reach out to new groups and organizations. Delaware Humanities had never

worked with companies before, and through this project we worked with two. We also worked with the Delaware Aerospace Education Foundation, which was our first partnership with a science-based organization. While we had partnered with the University of Delaware and Delaware State University, through this project we were able connect the academics and institutions of higher education to the general public. Our regular partners also expanded their horizons, working with local astronomy clubs, companies, and actors.

Technology

In this project we used technology in new ways for our organization. As part of the exhibit, we created DVDs that could play in the background showing Apollo footage from the 1960s and 1970s. This was our first experience creating a website for a special initiative and making resources available online. *DEstination: Space* also greatly encouraged our partners to explore new technology. The best example of this is Wilmington University creating their own virtual reality program of a moon walk, which showed components of the Lunar Landing site that came from Delaware. The university hosted an open house where the general public could visit, see the exhibit, enjoy the VR experience, and see a spacesuit.

Project Financial Structure

Overall, the project cost approximately \$50,000. The main costs were the exhibit design and fabrication, our lecturers' honorariums, discussion and workshop facilitators' honorariums, and the website. Our partners' estimated in-kind contributions were over \$40,000.

Delaware Humanities was extremely grateful to receive a grant from W.L. Gore & Associates for the cost of the exhibit design and fabrication.

Conclusion

In a time of such divisiveness, *DEstination: Space* was a way for Delawareans from vastly different backgrounds to come together to learn and to spark conversations. Attendees at all events learned more about our common bond as humans, where we have been, and where we could possibly go through collaboration and hard work. This project inspired us as well as our partner organizations to form new partnerships and helped us to find new audiences and supporters. Delaware Humanities boldly went where we have never gone before, and the experience was beyond rewarding.

Links

DEstination: Space website: <http://destinationspace.dehumanities.org/>

DEstination: Space images:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1RIALr5YDeKIGpqrDxlrPX28TXE3mUJvp?usp=sharing>