

CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
FY 2020





This year has been remarkable here at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. It was a year full of progress on all fronts, in which we continued to solidify our status as a pillar for learning in our community. We are now quickly approaching our Centennial. In anticipation, we collaborated with Nottingham Spirk and the Cleveland Institute of Art to develop a reimagined logo to mark the occasion. This logo will lead us into our next era of mission-driven growth.



We hosted thousands of visitors through our doors, and among them were some very special guests. This included Governor Mike DeWine and his family, who came to see *Dunkleosteus*, the state's current candidate for the official title of state Fossil Fish. We also welcomed esteemed Ethiopian delegates, including Ethiopian Ambassador to the United States Fitsum Arega, during their visit to Cleveland last August. In November, the Cleveland Browns's defensive end, Myles Garrett, paid a special visit to the Museum and our collections. And we were thrilled to welcome back former Curator of Physical Anthropology, Dr. Donald Johanson. Famous for his discovery of the iconic Lucy, Dr. Johanson was our keynote speaker for a sold-out Explorer Lecture event on October 25.

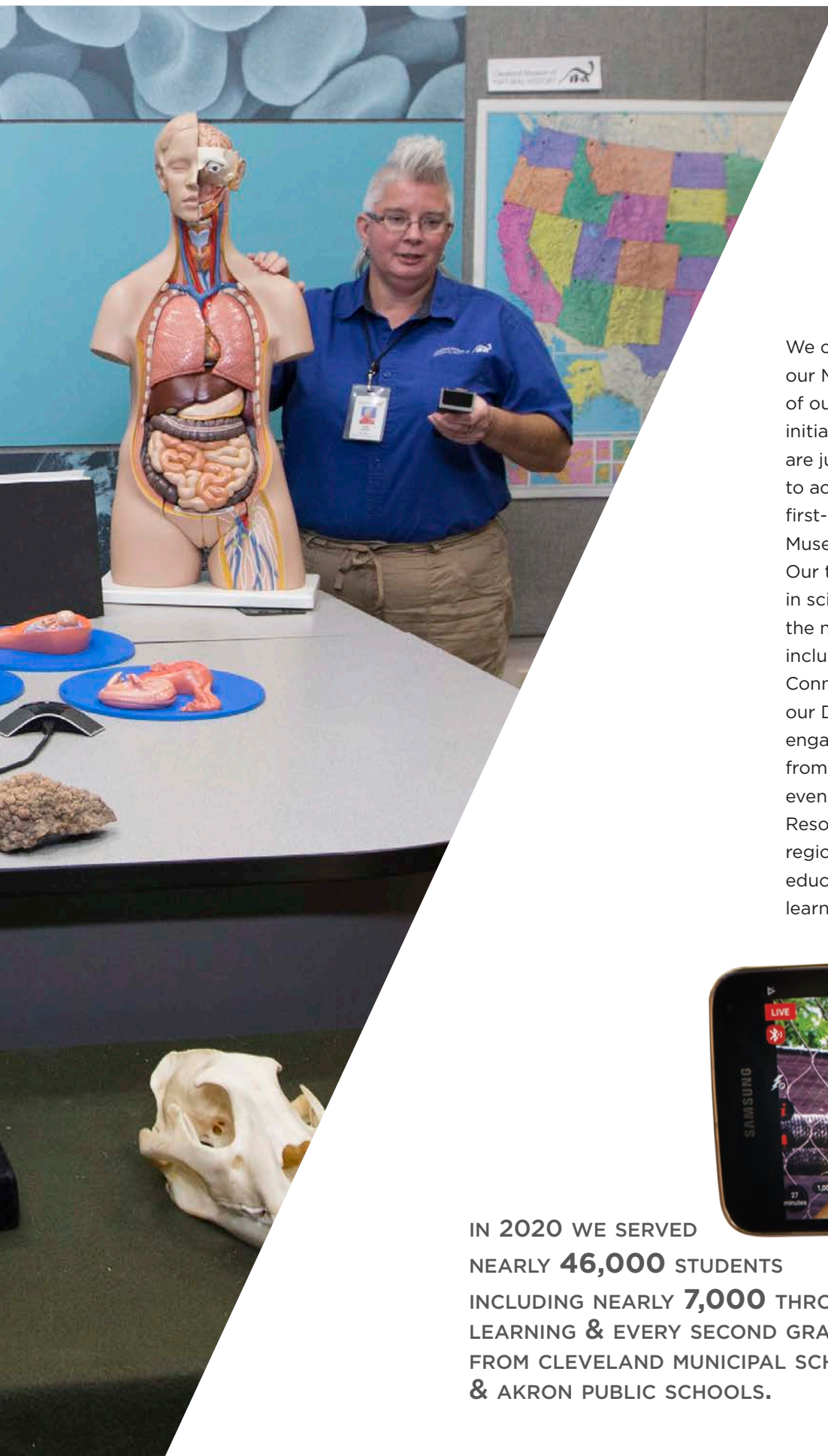


We also opened our doors to some prehistoric giants with our latest special exhibition, *Ultimate Dinosaurs*. The exhibit, which opened in October, 2019, has been a “smashing” success by all counts, and will continue to engage visitors thanks to an extension. I am also proud to announce that our Exhibits team received a significant accolade this year. Our first major 5,000+-square-foot, in-house-produced exhibit in more than a decade—*Fossil Hunters: The Search for Our Past*—won the “Best Exhibition (Over \$500,000)” honor from the Ohio Museums Association.



Another Explorer Lecture event in November paved the way for several important conversations regarding racial inequity in our community and beyond. We were thrilled to welcome renowned biological anthropologist Dr. Robin Nelson for this event as she discussed “The Race Prism.” We then continued this dialogue during all-staff diversity and inclusion training in partnership with Third Space Action Lab on January 6th. We are now conducting a Community Listening Project to understand the needs of the underserved neighborhoods surrounding the Museum and have committed to addressing racism in the community as a public health crisis.





We continue to work on ways to make our Museum accessible to all members of our community. Targeted educational initiatives, such as a new Teen Council, are just some of the ways we're working to accomplish this. We also hosted the first-ever teens-only night at the Museum, which was a rousing success. Our team shared the wonders of a career in science with young children across the nation through new virtual programs, including Science Explorers and Career Connections. Through these programs, our Distance Learning Coordinators engaged children across the country—from Ohio all the way to Alaska—and even across the globe! And, the Educator Resource Center helped teachers in our region develop critical skills in science education through a new professional learning community.

IN 2020 WE SERVED
NEARLY **46,000** STUDENTS
INCLUDING NEARLY **7,000** THROUGH VIRTUAL
LEARNING & EVERY SECOND GRADER
FROM CLEVELAND MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
& AKRON PUBLIC SCHOOLS.



Our research and collections also had a far-reaching impact this year. First announced online in August, the discovery of 3.8-million-year-old “remarkably complete” hominin cranium—named “MRD”—proved invaluable to our understanding of hominin evolution. The announcement spread far and wide, reaching nearly 3 billion people around the globe in a matter of six hours. As a result of this groundbreaking work in human origins, Dr. Haile-Selassie was named one of the “10 People Who Mattered in Science” in a special edition of the prestigious scientific publication *Nature*. The discovery was also recognized by *Smithsonian*, *Public Library of Science* (PLOS), *Scientific American*, and *Business Insider*. A special thanks goes out to Sue and George Klein as well as Doug and Laurie McCreery for investing in this important research.



Then, in October, Director of Research & Collections and Curator of Invertebrate Zoology Dr. Gavin Svenson announced his discovery of *Vespamantoida*, a species of praying mantis that was not previously known to science. After careful observation, Dr. Svenson realized the insect looked and acted like a wasp as a form of defense. This is a fascinating novel mimicry strategy that has given us a new understanding of mantis adaptations. Another landmark achievement occurred

internationally recognized program in biological research and student training.

We also welcomed our new Assistant Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology, Dr. Caitlin Colleary, to the team. She will research and help steward one of the institution’s most globally unique collections, which includes vertebrate faunas from the Ice Age, dinosaur fossils from the Late Cretaceous, and one of the world’s largest and most studied collections of Devonian fossil fish—like *Dunkleosteus*!

in late January when the National Science Foundation (NSF) announced that one of our very own would receive its prestigious CAREERS grant. Curator of Invertebrate Zoology, Dr. Nicole Gunter, was awarded one of the Museum’s largest NSF grants in its 100-year history. The nearly-\$975,000 grant will support research on species distribution and the development of a novel, creative data presentation strategy.

And, we continued to work with Case Western Reserve University, Holden Forests and Gardens, and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo as part of the BioScience Alliance, which is focused on developing a nationally and





But, while Dunk is certainly a fierce contender for our favorite specimen, the real winner this year was Balto, who was recently voted as our audience's most beloved Museum icon. The competition ran as part of our #GivingTuesdayNow fundraising campaign. We also continued work on the Transforming the World of Discovery campaign in support of the Museum's Transformation Project, which kicked off with the Gateway Projects—a complete makeover of the Thelma and Kent H. Smith Environmental Courtyard, renovation of Murch Auditorium, and the creation of a Current Science area.

With nearly 10,000 member-households this fiscal year, we have cultivated an incredible community of lifelong learners. We worked to nurture this community with a new members-only lecture series called After Hours: A Series of Curated Conversations & Cocktails. And, despite a moratorium on in-person events due to the pandemic, we pivoted our approach and continued to host the event in the virtual sphere using webinar technology.

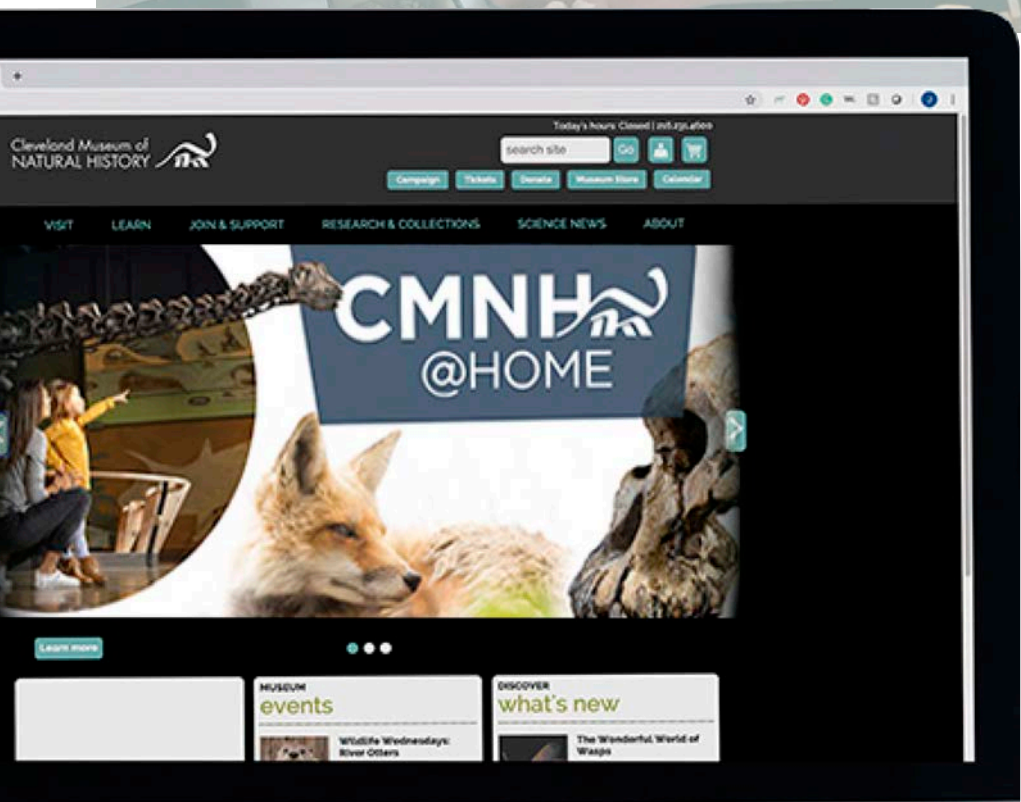
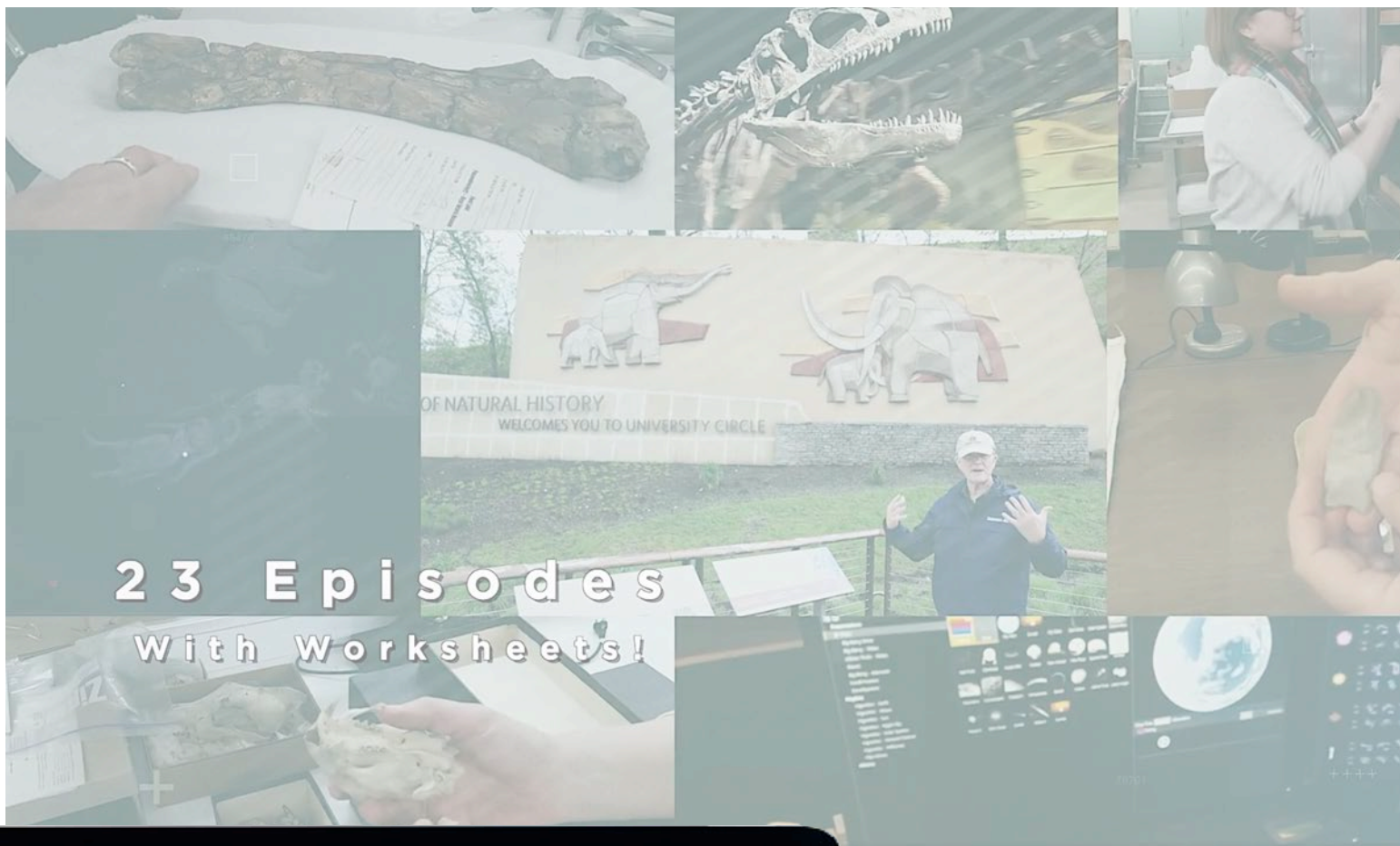
#GIVING
TUESDAY
NOW



VIRTUAL AFTER HOURS

A MEMBERS ONLY SERIES OF CURATED
CONVERSATIONS & COCKTAILS





In light of the pandemic, we also pivoted our marketing strategy and launched the Museum's first-ever virtual learning platform, CMNH@HOME. The initiative made the institution's vast repository of multimedia easily accessible to help our audiences stay connected and engaged with the Museum during our public closure. The project encompassed nearly 60 produced videos and countless live streams. Closed captioning and accompanying worksheets deepened the learning experience. The virtual learning platform received over 50,000 website views and reached nearly a million social media users. It was a wonderful first foray into this domain.



Through the unforeseen extended public closure in response to the pandemic, our staff rose to the occasion and adopted an All-In strategy to support one another. We've now adopted an All Hands on Deck approach. Though we now face significant challenges as we work to reopen to the public and navigate a "new normal," I am so proud of our many achievements. We are all driven by the many successes we enjoyed this year, and will continue to put forth our best efforts in fiscal year 2021.

