

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



## Cincinnati Museum Center

Renovation Leads to Expanded, Organized Storage for Priceless Queen City Historic Items

### CHALLENGE

Cincinnati's Union Terminal was built in 1933. Over the last 80-plus years, it has served as a train depot, a shopping mall and – currently – as the home of the Cincinnati Museum Center. The Center is comprised of three museums: the Cincinnati History Museum, the Cincinnati Natural History Museum, and the Duke Energy Children's Museum. When a quarter-cent sales tax was passed to fund the renovation of the terminal, all of the museum's collections (save those from the Children's Museum) needed to be moved out of the building to facilitate the work.

*"We needed to move over a million books and manuscripts, in addition to about 5,000 oversized artifacts from the History Museum and an additional 2,000 from the Natural History*

*Museum," said Jennifer Jensen, the Center's registrar. "We have everything from paleontology, zoology, large archival collections, history artifacts – it spans a giant scope of both human and natural history. We needed to find specific solutions that would help us solve specific problems."*

Items needed to be relocated to the Geier Collections and Research Center, located about a mile from Union Terminal. Although the space had been used for some time for museum storage, never before had so much material been housed there at one time. Originally, the Geier Center just had cabinetry and long-run shelving in very large rooms. Finding a way to safely, securely and adequately store treasured historical items presented a daunting challenge.

### SOLUTION

A history buff himself, Patterson Pope Account Executive Gordon Kwiecinski was excited about the opportunity. *"So much of these materials are Cincinnati,"* he said. *"The folks at the Museum Center really needed to double the size of their storage space at Geier so they could bring more things over there."* In all, there were five areas that received attention: Oversized History Objects, Zoology Collections, Manuscripts, the History Library, and the Fine Art Collection.

In several areas, existing shelving – from both the Geier Center itself and from a previous install at another site – was utilized to outfit the newly redesigned areas, saving money for the client. Jensen was eager to enumerate the systems that helped alleviate the Museum Center's storage dilemma. *"All five collections got additional space by adding compact shelving,"* she said. *"Zoology got*

*a mobile assist, Over-sized Objects got a mechanical-assist system, as did our Manuscript Collection and our Printed Works collection. Then we added a mobile art rack, as well."*

#### The Storage Applications included:

**Oversize Objects:** ActivRAC mechanical-assist mobile system; RaptorRAC wide-span shelving

**Vertebrate Zoology:** Eclipse powered mobile system with single-aisle entry sensors, 4-Post shelving

**Library:** Mechanical-assist mobile system with case-type shelving that was repurposed from Emory University

**Manuscript:** 12 ft. tall ActivRAC mechanical-assist system with 4-Post shelving

**Fine Arts:** Two mobile art rack systems

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Jennifer Jensen  
Registrar, Cincinnati Museum Center

*"What I'm most proud of is the fact that we maximized the available cubic feet, ensuring that all collections are now properly stored," Kwiecinski said. "The systems also provide easy access to all objects."*

Added Jensen, *"We came up with two large mobile art rack systems in the Fine Art area*

*that have allowed us to gain over 12,000 square feet of additional art storage space in a room with only a 5,000 square foot footprint." This specially fabricated floor-mount art rack was designed by Spacesaver. The installation at the Geier Center is the first of its kind.*

## ACHIEVEMENT

*"I think one of the biggest reasons we ended up working with Patterson Pope is because they were really interested in making sure that the systems we had that weren't functional for us could be repurposed. In addition, they were able to supply new systems that enhanced what we already had," said Jensen.*

*"The museum market is especially challenging, because the collections or the items that we're storing are irreplaceable," said Kwiecinski. "They need to be stored in a very specific way. And the curators with whom we work are very detail oriented and have very specific ways that they like to do things. In some cases, these curators have*

*worked with these items for 30 or 40 years. It's very personal to them. It's rewarding to know that they are trusting us with the protection of the items they love so dearly."*

For Jensen, choosing Patterson Pope was a wise decision. *"It was a really fun, rewarding experience," she said. "We've been extraordinarily excited about the possibilities, and we're also excited about the potential for growth in all these areas. In the end, Patterson Pope continues to be available for any issues that arise – in terms of rearranging shelving or helping us understand how the systems work. We couldn't have asked for a better partnership."*

