Instruments of American Excellence

View from the Hill

9/20/12

From athletics to politics to music and much more…there’s truly something for everyone at a unique exhibit opening tomorrow at the Kentucky Museum.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham has a preview of these ORDINARY instruments that helped Americans achieve “EXTRAORDINARY” success.

Dale Earnhardt, Judy Blume, Ken Burns. What do these people have in common? They are among the many successful people who’se items have been contributed to WKU’s new exhibit called “Instruments of American Excellence.”

 “I kind of like Charlie Daniels fiddle right here…everyone can relate to that one.”

And what about Helen Keller’s Braille Bible…or Sandra Day O’Conner’s copy of the constitution?

 “These items are the ordinary instruments that great Americans have used to achieve phenomenal success but the story is the inspiration that this exhibit portrays.”

Dan Murph pitched the concept for this one of a kind museum to WKU President Gary Ransdell two years ago.

 “It started with me myself back at my house sitting down, coming up with who are my icons, who are my people in the different fields that I thought would be fascinating.”

The list of items grew even more diverse once a board was established.

 “Committee meetings for two years, collections for two years, the process of getting this museum ready for the last half year. It’s been a long, carefully orchestrated process.”

The star-studded exhibit will include an iconic symbol of philanthropy donated by former President Jimmy Carter.

 “It changed what’s expected of a modern day President, once they leave office, no longer allowed to sit on the couch and write their memoires the rest of their lives.”

Yes, even a microphone was donated by Sun Studios in Memphis. True inspiration at every turn.

 “From Daniel Boone’s saddlebags to Terry Wilcutt’s space suit that he wore at the International Space Station, so many things that have led to greatness by great Americans.”

The Instruments of American Excellence exhibit opens at the Kentucky Museum tomorrow afternoon at one with a special ceremony and ribbon cutting. Admission is free during this opening weekend.

 The exhibit, which is permanent, will evolve over the years as more items are sought.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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