

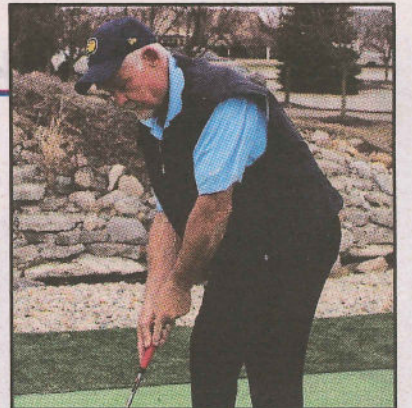
Living Life After 50

Free

May 2019

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Vol. 34, No. 5 32,425 Circulation

**TREASURED VOLUNTEER** — The Eiteljorg Museum nominated Sharon Mills for a Rose Award which shines a light on those in the hospitality industry who go out of their way to make guests feel special. Mills volunteers at the museum two days a week conducting guided tours for various groups, helping guests interact with some of the hands-on exhibits, working in the museum library or folding programs for a special event. (Photo provided)

Proud to take part

Eiteljorg volunteer

## Sharon Mills

By JULIE YOUNG  
Feature Writer

Sharon Mills said her interest in Native American history and art stemmed from her career as an educator.

"I used to teach second grade and the Native American tribes were one of our units," she said. "I always felt that I needed to know more than what was covered in (social studies) so my interest came from the curriculum I taught."

After 30-plus years in the classroom, Mills has been able to explore that interest more fully as a volunteer at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian and Western Art. Two days a week, she can be found on the campus conducting guided tours for various groups, helping guests interact with some of the hands-

on exhibits, working in the museum library or folding programs for a special event.

"I just do whatever they need me to do," she said. "The Eiteljorg is a great place to volunteer my time."

The museum thinks she is pretty great as well. In addition for recognizing her for the time she donates to the facility, the Eiteljorg nominated her for a Rose Award, which shines a light on those in the hospitality industry who go out of their way to make guests feel special. Mills, who grew up in Irvington on the city's east side and attended Thomas Carr Howe High School before earning her degree, said she likes being an ambassador for the city as well as the people she meets along the way.

"We get a lot of people who are in

town for a convention as well as those who are here for the race and other events. Even though I share my knowledge with them while they are here, the people who are drawn to the museum bring a lot of information with them as well," she said. "I learn as much from them so it's really a two-way street."

Mills said she is never far away from an educational environment and she is always excited about a new exhibit, special installation or a new program. She is particularly enthusiastic about the No Limits Arts Series, a project that aims to strengthen inclusiveness in the arts for individuals with disabilities. High school students from the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired are working alongside the Eiteljorg, along with other arts-based organizations to increase accessibility for those with disabilities so they can

better participate in exhibits and special events.

"We are not only trying to attract a diverse global audience, but also a diverse audience right here at home," she said. "We are only at the beginnings of the discovery process with this program, but I am really excited to learn what the needs are and how we can address them."

Mills said the Eiteljorg offers a lot of programs and events for active adults to take part in including their summer under the Sails music series, Lunch-time Concerts on the Canal and Indy's Big Read 2019, which celebrates the western novel "True Grit" by Charles Portis.

"The Eiteljorg is a great place to spend some time and I am proud to be part of it in some small way," she said.

**FOREVER LEARNER** — Sharon Mills, a volunteer at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian and Western Art, looks over artifacts from a Native American tribe. Mills' interest in Native American culture stems from her career as an educator. (Photo provided)

