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CONTACT: Kristy Harrington
616/929-1713
kharrington@grmuseum.org

***Wonder of Life – Redux* Companion Exhibit Brings Local Flair to Grand Rapids Public Museum’s “BODIES REVEALED”**

Grand Rapids, MI (November 17, 2010) –The compelling BODIES REVEALED exhibition, installed on the Grand Rapids Public Museum’s third floor through May 1, 2011, tells the story of the human body using the latest methods in human anatomy preservation and tools for science education. *Wonder of Life – Redux*, a companion exhibit running alongside this national exhibiton, narrates the same story with nostalgic flair.

“The Grand Rapids Public Museum has engaged with the community in studying the human body for a long time” says Dale Robertson, Museum President and CEO. “In 1970 the Museum partnered with the Kent County Medical Society to open the popular *Wonder of Life* exhibition at its 54 Jefferson Avenue facility.” At the time, the exhibit was described as “a scientifically presented story of the beginning and development of human life”.

In a nod to the past, our new temporary exhibit reflects upon human anatomy and science learning experiences from forty years ago and creates a unique context in which to explore the medical marvels of today. The second floor exhibit includes:

Transparent Anatomical Manikin

Created in the mid 1960s, the transparent anatomical manikin (TAM) was considered the premier health education device of its day. It was designed to “tell the story of your body and how it works.”

TAM is 5’8” tall and weighs 100 pounds, with clear plastic “skin” that allows for display of internal systems. Her right half shows muscles, veins and the lymphatic system. Her left shows bones, arteries and nerves. As her various organs lit up, a sound track described how each functioned. When the Museum acquired TAM in 1970, it was among an elite group of museums and science centers across the country to have this “high-tech” health education device.

Growth of the Human Fetus

Human embryo and fetus specimens from the former *Wonder of Life* exhibition.

- 5 week embryo
- 10 week embryo in utero (2 -1/2 months)
- 14 week fetus in utero (3 -1/2 months)
- 16 week male fetus (4 months)
- 20 week male fetus (5 months)

(Note: Developing humans are referred to as embryos for the first ten weeks, and as fetuses from the eleventh week until birth.)

These human specimens were acquired as “wet tissue” during the development of the original *Wonder of Life* exhibition, working in tandem with local medical and health professionals and the Cleveland Health Museum which designed and constructed the entire exhibition.

In 2002, the Museum asked Roy A. Glover, Ph.D., Director of the University of Michigan Medical School’s Plastination Laboratory in the Division of Anatomical Sciences, to properly preserve these specimens using a new method. As wet tissue they were preserved in a liquid that was toxic and difficult to maintain. The plastination or polymer preservation method he used on these museum specimens is the same one employed in preparation of the human specimens in the BODIES REVEALED exhibition.

Human Skeleton with Artificial Joint Implants, ca. 1974

This human skeleton was created specifically for the Museum’s *Wonder of Life* exhibit. It was designed to show the latest orthopaedic replacements for arthritic or destroyed joints, many of which were developed by Alfred B. Swanson, M.D. and his orthopaedic research staff at Blodgett Memorial Hospital in Grand Rapids. The artificial joints shown act as flexible hinges that mimic the biomechanics of the joints they replace.

Wonder of Life – Redux is free with Grand Rapids Public Museum general admission. Admission to the BODIES REVEALED exhibition is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-member adult tickets. Members may tour BODIES REVEALED at any time during open hours. Non-members must purchase a timed-entry ticket. For more information call 616.456.3977 or visit grmuseum.org.

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