



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **What's In Your Attic? Oregon State Capitol Foundation seeks help tracking down governors' portraits**

**SALEM, Ore. 15 Sept., 2022** — In an effort to help preserve our state's history and make it accessible to Oregonians, educators, art enthusiasts, history buff and others, the [Oregon State Capitol Foundation](#) is launching the [Governors' Portraits Search](#) to locate and catalog missing portraits of former Oregon governors.

"We know many oil paintings of territorial and state governors were lost when the Capitol burned in 1935, but we also know some of them were saved from the fire," said Joan Plank, Capitol Foundation Board member.

"My grandfather Arch Geer, who I called Pappy, helped rescue portraits of the governors from the walls of the burning building, including Gov. Geer's portrait, but it vanished. Years later, Pappy found the Geer portrait in Walden Hall at Willamette University. After its restoration, the painting made its way to the Geer building at MacLaren School, eventually making its way back to the Capitol."

Last year, the Capitol Foundation learned that the great-great-granddaughter of Gov. James Withycombe, Claire Withycombe, discovered a formal portrait of the former governor hanging in her grandmother's home. While it is unknown if this portrait, painted while Gov. Withycombe was still in office, ever hung in the Capitol, its discovery gives us hope that other artwork depicting Oregon's former governors may still exist.

The Capitol Foundation is asking for help tracking down any formal portraits of Oregon's former governors. While the public may [schedule an appointment](#) to view paintings and busts of some former Oregon governors that are displayed in the State Archives Administrative Suite during Capitol construction, others may be in private homes, schools, universities, museums, businesses, court houses, or public buildings.

Capitol Foundation board member Bruce Bishop said, "We want to know about the portraits so we can log their existence." The nonprofit does not want to reclaim the portraits and will keep the location of artwork located in residences private.

“We know where a few portraits and busts are located, but around [27 portraits are missing](#). With each portrait we locate, we learn interesting background stories about the governor or portrait itself. It’s a great way to learn more about Oregon history,” said Bishop.

If you have information about the location of any of the missing portraits, please contact OSCF at [oscf@oregoncapitolfoundation.org](mailto:oscf@oregoncapitolfoundation.org) or 503-363-1859.

For more information about the Oregon State Capitol Foundation, visit [www.oregoncapitolfoundation.org](http://www.oregoncapitolfoundation.org).

### **About Oregon State Capitol Foundation**

Oregon State Capitol Foundation is dedicated to preserving the people's building as a vibrant place to engage with history and democracy as well as sponsoring educational programs focused on heritage and civics education. In 2015, the Capitol Foundation became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and is funded by generous donors and purchasers of Pacific Wonderland license plates. For more information, visit [www.oregoncapitolfoundation.org](http://www.oregoncapitolfoundation.org) or call 503-363-1859.

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