



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
RESEARCH, INNOVATION & IMPACT

# ALFIE NORVILLE GEM & MINERAL MUSEUM

## The Evolution Continues



*Image of Historic Pima County Courthouse. Photo: PimaCountyWebmaster*

Located in downtown Tucson, the historical Pima County Courthouse has been described as “the most outstanding Spanish Colonial revival building in Arizona” and home to the new Alfie Norville Gem & Mineral Museum. The 12,000 square feet exhibit space will feature over 2,000 world-class specimens. The museum will also include curated loan exhibits to illustrate and tell the stories of how minerals evolved, how we as humans have collected them, and the many ways we use minerals in our daily lives today.

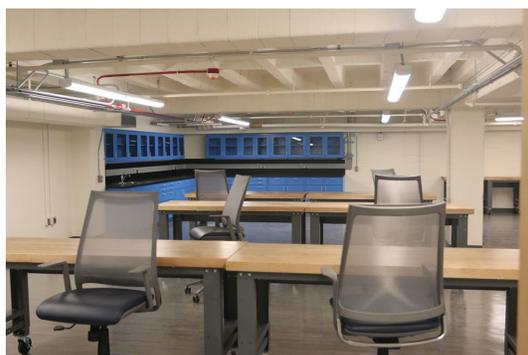
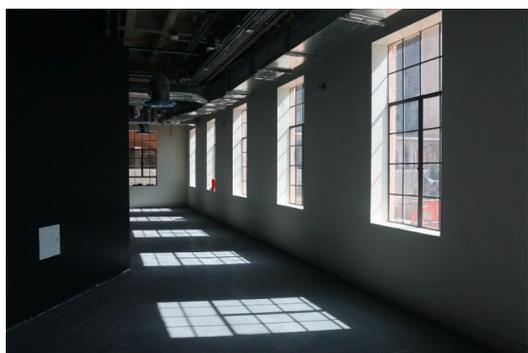
The museum is named to honor the memory of Alfie Norville, co-founder of the GJX Gem and Jewelry Show. GJX is a part of the Tucson Gem, Mineral and Fossil Showcase that attracts tens of thousands of people to Tucson, AZ each year in February. The world’s largest gem and mineral show holds an impressive display of minerals, meteorites, jewelry, gemstones, and fossils.

# Museum Updates

The University of Arizona Gem & Mineral Museum is pleased to announce that the Alfie Norville Gem & Mineral Museum is now guided by Executive Director Joaquin Ruiz, Vice President of Global Environmental Futures. The museum has also transitioned departments and is now a part of University of Arizona Research, Innovation & Impact (RII). RII is responsible for the advancement of bold, distinctive research centers, institutes and museums within the University.

The museum will begin moving into the lower level of the Courthouse. With the help of volunteers lead by Dr. Hexiong Yang, specimens and artifacts will begin transitioning to the space in September.

During the rise of COVID-19 the safety of our community and staff has been a top priority for the museum team. The museum team led by project manager Eric Fritz, have continued working remotely for the last five months. As the University of Arizona continues their reopening process, the museum is taking measures to ensure the safety of visitors leading up to our opening in 2021.



*Top Left: Photo of current photo of museum construction progress. Top Right: Case construction by [Meyvaert Museum](#). Bottom Left: Downstairs Lower level Prep Room. Bottom Right: Azurite Mining Stope design being built by [Dixon Studios](#).*

# Thank You and Acknowledgements

We want to thank Dr. Robert Downs and the mineral museum advisory board for the leadership and vision over the past 10 years during the museum's time at Flandrau Science Center & Planetarium.

We are sincerely grateful for the world class gem and mineral loans programmed for display from Dr. Gene Meieran, Dr. Rob Lavinsky, Les Presmyk, Robbie McCarty, Evan Jones, and Peter Megaw. Guidance from the gem trade experts during the museum build out has been greatly appreciated from Cap Beesley, Bruce Bridges and Shelly Sergent. Debra Colodner provided hands-on activity suggestions leading to the creation of the Crystal Lab as well as docent training. John Lucking and Dr. Alex Schauss helped guide governance and aid fundraising efforts. Lastly, thank you to Will Wilkinson for providing modern mining content in the Arizona Gallery.

## Donations & Loans

One hundred years of donations make up the UA Alfie Norville Gem & Mineral collection. Recent gifts include the Michael and Carmen Blank collection and the conveyance of loaned specimens to the permanent collection from Ann and Ed David. Longtime supporter Mark LeFont will have many pieces from his collection on display as well. Gem aficionado, Jeffrey Bergman donated a fantastic selection of trapiche stones as well as a gem reference collection. Loans are also an integral part of the museum holdings and exhibition. Rotating gem exhibits include Paula Crevoshay, Nicholai Medvedev and the American Jewelry Design Council. The Somewhere in the Rainbow Collection (SITR) will be showcasing some of the finest examples of gemstones, jewelry, and gem artistry within the museum's treasury.

## *Interested in Loaning or Donating?*

*Click below or copy and  
paste in browser:*

[https://gemandmineral  
museum.arizona.edu/do  
nate.html](https://gemandmineralmuseum.arizona.edu/donate.html)

# Museum Overview

## Mineral Evolution Gallery

Visitors begin in the Mineral Evolution Gallery which visually tells the story of the geologic forces that formed, and that continue to shape our planet. Walking among the surrounding specimens and multi-media exhibits, visitors will learn the story of Earth's formation, beginning with the original 50-60 minerals shared by celestial bodies. Featured exhibits include a timeline of minerals that emerged every 500 million years, rock-forming minerals, trilobite fossils, and a snapshot of Earth's Great Oxidation Event.



*A truly spectacular banded iron formation, this specimen represents Earth's Great Oxidation Event. Photo: University of Arizona*

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## Arizona Gallery

Arizona's rich geological resources have contributed greatly to the American industrial revolution through its mining of copper. The Arizona Gallery introduces the mining process with a custom designed azurite stope that creates the experience of entering a Bisbee mine. The design of the display was carefully overseen by experts in the field: the Graeme family of Bisbee, Arizona. The gallery will include artifacts from historical mining as well as modern mining. Arizona mines have produced minerals coveted by collectors around the world. Other gallery displays will include a ultraviolet illuminated hall showcasing fluorescent gems & minerals, a case on becoming a rock hound, rotating displays from world class collectors, and more.

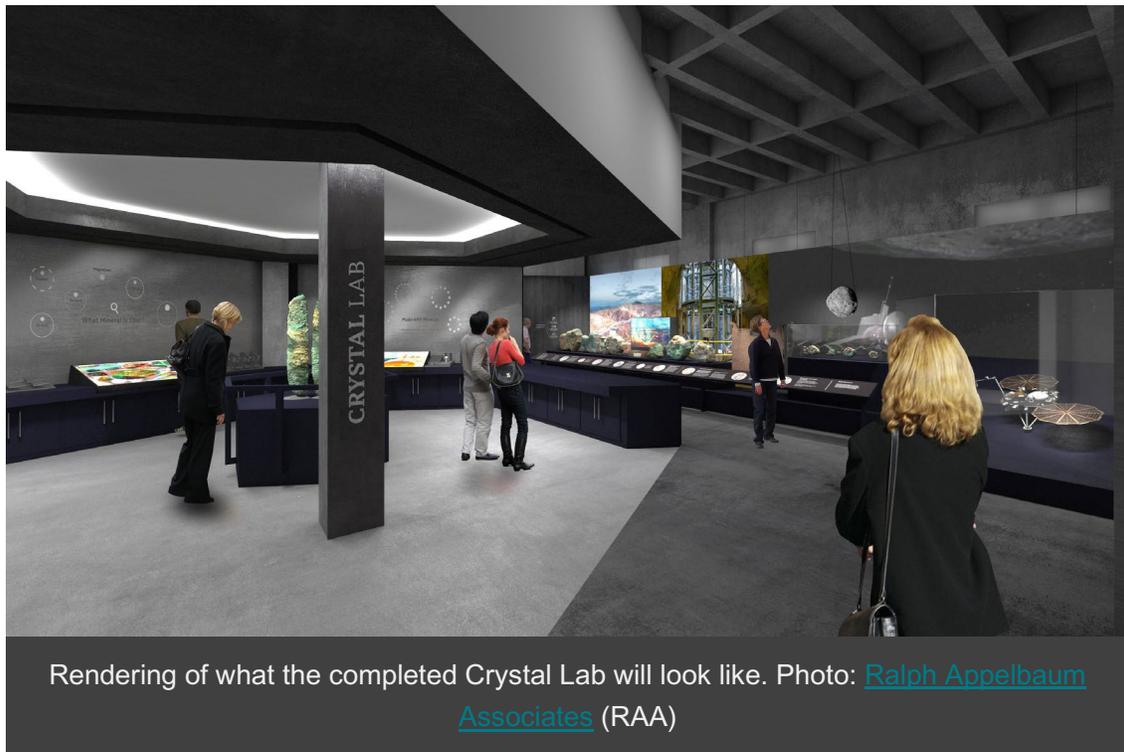


*Wulfenite, the state mineral, populates an exhibit showing various colors, localities and variability. Photo: Jeff Scovil*

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## Crystal Lab

Located across from the Arizona Gallery, the Crystal Lab features hands-on activities that encourage visitors of all ages to discover how crystals form, how geologists identify minerals, and how we use minerals in our daily lives.



Rendering of what the completed Crystal Lab will look like. Photo: [Ralph Appelbaum Associates](#) (RAA)

## Gem Gallery & Treasury

From birthstones to diamonds and precious metals, the incredible handcrafted jewels in this gallery add an air of exclusivity to heighten the visitor experience. Visitors are able to observe fine gems, cut and fashioned into dazzling jewelry by artisans from start to finish. The optical bench introduces the visitor to gem science identification processes through a series of hands-on interactives.



Left: 13 carat Blue Zircon ring with purple (treated) and orange diamonds in 18kt yellow gold from the SITR Collection. Right: Rendering of the Treasury. Photo: RAA

## Lower Level Community Space

In addition to a state-of-the-art research lab, collection storage, and specimen preparation facilities, the lower level will include areas for community classes, workshops, trade presentations and the opportunity to collaborate within the gem and mineral communities.



*Left: Photo of lower level research lab. Right: Reference Library with metal shelves. Library will be available for some public use.*

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## Museum Board

*The University of Arizona Alfie Norville Gem & Mineral Museum presents current advisory board members:*

**Paul S. Harter** - Board Chairman, Mineral and Gem Enthusiast

**Allan Norville**- Lead Benefactor and Philanthropist

**Richard Graeme** - Mining Geologist, Engineer and Bisbee Mineral Guru

**Robbie McCarty**- Benefactor, Published Mineral Collector, and Educator

**Patricia Syvrud** - Industry Leader in Ethical Sourcing and Sustainable Fair Gem Trade

**Shelly Sergent** - Collection Manager and Curator of the *Somewhere in the Rainbow Gemstone and Jewelry Collection*

**Duncan Pay** - Senior Vice President & Chief Academic Officer of Gemological Institute of America (GIA)

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*What more information on the Museum? For Questions Regarding the Museum, Please Contact us at 520-358-7923 or [ericwfritz@arizona.edu](mailto:ericwfritz@arizona.edu).*