

6-28-2013

UA3/9 Baker Museum

WKU President's Office

Gary Ransdell

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From: Gary Ransdell
To: Faculty-All; Staff-All
Subject: Baker Museum
Date: Fri. 6/28/2013 11:16AM

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

Many of you may have heard by now about the fire at the Baker Museum which houses rare artwork by Joe Downing. This message is to do two things: assure you that Jerry is safe, and we saved nearly all of the art. Ninety percent of it does not have serious damage, but nearly all of it has some level of smoke damage. Much of the serious damage was mostly from smoke and water, but most of the pieces can likely be restored. The pieces are all now safely in storage. Our team in Planning, Design and Construction are working directly with restoration experts and insurance professionals to start the recovery process for both the museum building and the art. The Kentucky Museum still is fully engaged as are members of the Art faculty.

The second message is tell you how proud I am of our WKU employees who immediately responded with several WKU trucks and enough human power to help get the art out of the burning building, loaded onto trucks, and brought to safe keeping on campus. We had our Grounds Crew and many Facilities employees working hard yesterday with the Baker Museum staff to save and protect the art while area volunteer firemen were extinguishing the fire. Even our campus Catering team responded with food and water for the those who were working in the heat.

Special thanks go out to staffs in Facilities, Planning/Design and Construction, Catering, the Kentucky Museum, Purchasing, the Art Department, and others for incredible teamwork in an emergency.

The Hilltopper spirit was in full motion at the Baker Museum and because of that nearly all of these priceless works of art are safe. Now the hard work of rebuilding and restoring will occur; the building will be rebuilt and the damaged pieces will be restored. This treasure, which includes Joe Downing's life's work, will remain a part of our community for many generations to come. Great job to all involved. Thank you.

Gary A. Ransdell