

Mineral collection goes on display at UA

ALAN FISCHER

The premier elements of a \$7 million collection of minerals and rare books will go on display at the University of Arizona Mineral Museum Feb. 9.

The collection, which includes 871 mineral specimens covering 64 species and more than 300 rare books on mineralogy, was donated to UA by the estate of Hubert Charles de Monmonier.

More than 300 of the best specimens were picked for the display, said Shirley Wetmore, curatorial specialist at the museum.

The specimens came from around the world and include quartz, tourmaline, silver, beryl and more than 70 of gold, she said.

A gold specimen that came from the 1849 California gold rush's Jamestown mines is the size of a dinner plate.

The rare book collection includes a volume published in 1558 containing, "De Ortu et Causis Subterraneorum" and "De Natura Fossilium," by Georgius Agricola, and a translation of "De Re Metallica" by former President Hoover, a mining engineer, and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover, a geologist and Latinist, published in 1912, Wetmore said.

The collection includes numerous books by modern-day geology experts including Peter Bancroft, George Kunz, John Sinkankas and John White.

The UA Mineral Museum is in the UA Flandrau Science Center, 1601 E. University Blvd.

The exhibit runs through May 31.

The museum will offer extended hours the weeks of Feb. 11 and Feb. 18, she said, to accommodate visitors coming to Tucson's spring gem and mineral show season.

"We run a special exhibit every year during the show," Wetmore said. "We get an increase in folks from around the world this time of year."

The museum will be open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday, 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday, noon to 9 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday during those two weeks, she said.

Admission is \$5, with children under 4 free.

Admission includes the mineral museum's exhibits as well as a show at the Flandrau Planetarium, she said.

Museum curators transported the collection from Vista, Calif. in a cargo van, she said. The \$7 million value was set by appraisal after the minerals and books arrived in Tucson, she said.

The addition of the de Monmonier collection cements the UA's position as one of the top university mineral collections in the nation, Wetmore said. The school depends on donated specimens, she said.

De Monmonier, who spent part of his youth in Arizona, died in March.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

University of Arizona Mineral Museum site:
www.geo.arizona.edu/minmus/

IF YOU GO

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When: runs through May 31

Where: the University of Arizona Mineral Museum, in the UA Flandrau Science Center, 1601 E. University Blvd.

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Call 621-4227 for more information including regular business hours.