

Mysterious collector donates \$7 million collection to the UA Mineral Museum

Crystalline gold from Eagle's Nest Mine, Placer County, California. Photo by Sven Bailey

Includes rare specimens connected to the California Gold Rush

Flandrau: The UA Science Center announced today that The University of Arizona Mineral Museum has received a substantial mineral and rare book collection from the late Hubert Charles de Monmonier.

De Monmonier was a relatively unknown collector who amassed a unique and comprehensive private collection recently valued at more than \$7 million.

The collection is comprised of 871 mineral specimens, many of which are considered to be very rare, very old and very beautiful. The collection includes more than 70 gold specimens. One is the size of a dinner plate, found at the Jamestown mines, near the historic Mother Load responsible for starting the 1849 California gold rush, and considered one of the largest known specimens from that location.

"We are deeply honored and moved that Hubert de Monmonier entrusted the museum with his cherished and valuable collection," said Alexis R. Faust, Flandrau's executive director. "We're very excited to share this precious collection with the public and look forward to the time when we can showcase it as part of the new UA Science Center located in Tucson's downtown redevelopment area."

Born in Illinois in 1919, de Monmonier's lifelong fascination with minerals began when he discovered a box of minerals under the porch at his grandparents' house in Pearce, Ariz. Living in Los Angeles, he also became fascinated by drought tolerant plants called xerophytes. At the age of 15, he became an active member in both a mineral club and a cactus society. After serving in the army, de Monmonier returned to Los Angeles in 1946, first working as a groundskeeper for the school district, then as a sheet metal worker. He died in March 2007. De Monmonier arranged for his collection to go the UA through an estate gift managed by the UA Foundation Office of Planned Giving.

"The de Monmonier collection is the finest, largest and most diverse collection that the Mineral Museum has received in its history," said Karl Flessa, professor and head of the UA department of geosciences.

In a special featured exhibit, a portion of the Hubert C. de Monmonier collection will be unveiled at Flandrau:

The UA Science Center in February 2008 and will coincide with the Tucson Mineral and Gem Show.

The addition of de

Monmonier's collection

makes the UA Mineral Museum

one of the best university-

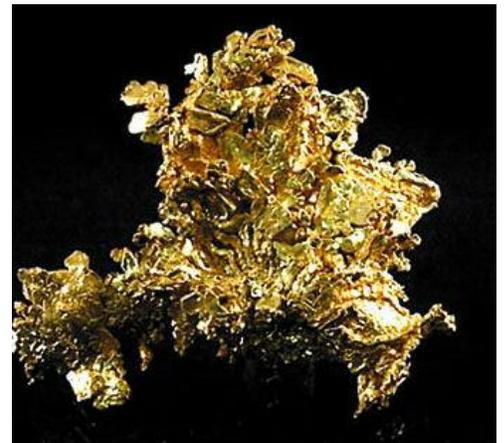
owned mineral

collections in the United States. The new UA Science Center, with construction scheduled to begin in fall of 2008, will feature the mineral museum as well as an observatory, IMAX theater, digital planetarium, butterfly vivarium, a reality science exchange and a gallery for traveling exhibits.

Projected to open in 2011, the UA Science Center will also introduce Pathways, a pioneering Internet and digital technology that will allow individuals to personalize their experience at the Center based on their interests, hobbies and education levels before, during and after their visit.

Expected to attract over 340,000 visitors to downtown Tucson each year, the center will be open seven days a week, 364 days a year, with activities and shows planned into the evening and weekend hours, including the observatory which will be open until 10 p.m.

Currently, Flandrau: The UA Science Center, which houses the Mineral Museum, is open Thursday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with evening hours from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday from noon to 9 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. The science center is located on the northeast corner of University Boulevard and Cherry Avenue. For more information visit www.gotUAsciencecenter.org or call 520- 621-STAR.



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