

# Ross Edelstein

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## Profile

Uniquely qualified and talented individual, seeking to expand his skills in the area of museum and cultural education and inclusion using well-established historical analysis and organizational skills to deliver world-class museum experiences. Particular interest in museum education for people with disabilities, with a focus on individuals with autism.

- **Disability Awareness:** Well-read in literature regarding individuals with disabilities and their educational needs, particularly in the context of museums. Acute awareness of the power of lived experience and letting other voices shine.
- **Communications:** Extremely capable at written communication and accomplished in oral communication, with ability to explain difficult concepts to wide varieties of audiences.
- **Information Technology:** Highly knowledgeable about core Microsoft programs such as Word, OneNote, and PowerPoint, with knowledge of Excel and Publisher, and ability to self-teach new programs quickly. Knowledge of creation software such as Photoshop, as well as SurveyMonkey.
- **Key Strengths:** Highly developed research and analysis skills. Strong ability to work well with a team while taking on various other roles while employed. Particular strength in communication between colleagues and management to streamline the flow of work. Proactive in problem solving and attempting to produce highest quality work possible. Excellent skills in listening and learning from others.

## Education

**TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY**, Kirksville, Missouri

BA in History (May 2019); 3.92 GPA (Major)

*President's List (Fall 2018 and Spring 2019)*

*Martha McClaskey Humanities Scholarship*

*Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society), Inducted Spring 2019*

*Published in The Apprentice Historian (2019) for "Contrary to Justice, Humanity, and Policy: The Slave Trade as an Instrument of British Power, 1803-1820"*

*Speaker, 2019 Student Research Conference for "Contrary to Justice, Humanity, and Policy: The Slave Trade as an Instrument of British Power, 1803-1820"*

*Speaker, 2017 Missouri Association of Museums and Archives Conference for "The Student Archivist: How Real World Experiences Enhances Study and The Community."*

**Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis**, Indianapolis, Indiana

MA in Museum Studies (May 2021); 3.93 GPA (Overall)

*Speaker, 2020 Association of Midwest Museums Conference for "Autism and Museums: More than Sensory Friendly."<sup>1</sup>*

*Featured, IUPUI Graduate Office Student Successes.*

**Indiana University**, Bloomington, Indiana

PhD in Special Education (May 2025)

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<sup>1</sup> Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19

# Experience

## **The Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana**

### **Public Programs Intern, 08/2020-Present**

Undertakes accessibility work for the Public Programs department of the Eiteljorg Museum. Projects completed are varied across multiple areas of accessibility work, but include: a report on public-facing accessibility in relation to COVID-19, work with the internal museum accessibility team, development of external connections to community groups, closed captioning of virtual programs, development, design, and deployment of social narratives for museum use both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as development of training for museum staff. Future programs are ongoing to help develop more accessibility in the educational work of the museum, as well as generally pushing for inclusive practice at the Eiteljorg.

## **Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium, Chicago, Illinois**

### **Panel Speaker, 10/2020**

Spoke on a panel dedicated to allowing cultural organizations to better provide programming to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Provided information from two perspectives: that of an emerging museum professional, who is both steeped in the research of a master's program and the practice of an internship, as well as that of a person with autism. Provided complementary information to other panel speakers and worked to provide as much contextual information on the needs of museums as well as their audiences as possible.

## **The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana**

### **Volunteer Accessibility Consultant, 03/2020-Present**

Provides limited free consultation to the accessibility staff at the Indianapolis Children's Museum to help further inclusion and accessibility. High level discussion of inclusive practices and desired programs were discussed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consultation on the COVID-19 social narrative has been provided and some ideas were included. Discussions of future projects are in progress.

## **Great American Songbook Foundation, Carmel, Indiana**

### **Archives Intern, 01/2019-06/2020**

Primarily engaged in the digitization of the Meredith Willson collection. Meredith Willson, most famous for the hit Broadway and Hollywood Musical, *The Music Man*, left a large collection of both paper and audio material to the Songbook Foundation. Worked to determine who was in each recording, what Willson works were played, and helped flesh out significance of each recording, as well as confirming that each digitized recording was complete. Assisted with cataloging of CD's into LibraryWorld and OCLC databases, as well as assisting with the digital move to a new facility in the ATOM collections database. Helped with the supervision of volunteer staff members. Additionally, assisted in the completion of metadata of earlier digitized recordings, as well as undertaking other archival and museum tasks as necessary, including assessing the museum space for accessibility.

**Archives Volunteer, 07/2020-12/2020**

Continues work on the Meredith Willson collection that was not completed, primarily around metadata creation.

**Infiniteach, Chicago, Illinois**

**Volunteer Evaluator, 12/2019-Present**

Assisted Infiniteach staff in the development of a research project into the use of technology to help include individuals with autism in museums. Research would have studied the feelings of both staff and museum visitors. Information gained in this project would have been used to improve the support that Infiniteach's app provides, as well as help to better generally understand the use of technology to support inclusive practice and education in museums.

**Webinar Speaker, 05/2020**

Spoke at a webinar on access in museums through virtual and in person programs near the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, this webinar focused on ways that museums could help adjust virtual programs to be accessible to people with autism, as well as help museums better understand the meaning of museums to individuals with autism. Webinar is distributed freely on YouTube.

**Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Volunteer Accessibility Content Designer, 10/2019-Present**

Volunteers time and expertise gained through Museum Studies research into autism-related and general accessibility issues to develop new and innovative materials and methods to help further accessibility at the Indiana State Museum.

Current projects include the development of social narratives and pre-visit materials for accessibility, analysis of the Indiana State Museum website for accessible content, and assistance with designating in-gallery spaces to help with sensory differences. Helped develop a quiet room activity space for Family New Year's Eve 2019, and completed evaluation of the space from that day. Working on developing training for staff on better working with individuals with disabilities.

**Engagement Specialist, 5/2019-8/2019**

Worked on the floor providing excellent experiences to guests of the Indiana State Museum's temporary galleries, including Cardboard Engineering, Creativity Studio, and Color of Style. Assisted in other areas of the museum when necessary, including permanent galleries as well as special events. Designed daily demos for use in engaging museum visitors, including the Art of Advertising demo, and worked with team leadership to find exciting opportunities to tie in Indiana culture to the museum in innovative ways.

**DFB&T, Inc., Wesley Chapel, Florida**

**Board Member, 12/2020-Present**

Member of the board of DFB&T, Inc., a Florida non-profit that provides training and tools to dental offices to allow them to better support patients with autism. Provides cutting-edge industry insights as gained through research in the Museum Studies Program at IUPUI as well as museum practice gained elsewhere for non-profit management. Offers a voice for the end-user of the non-profit's services, people with autism, on the board at large. Engages at board meetings to provide relevant insight and information, as well as appropriate and effective governance for the organization as it launches its training products as well as employment support operations.

**Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana**

**Doctor of Philosophy – Special Education 08/2021 – 05/2025**

**Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Master of Arts - Museum Studies 08/2019 – 05/2021**

Current Masters of Arts candidate in Museum Studies to be completed in May of 2021, with specializations in Museum Education and issues pertaining to accessibility. Current research includes museums' present accessibility for visitors on the autism spectrum, ranging from analysis of scholarly articles from the field,

to telephone or in-person interviews with museum professionals and those who work with cultural organizations to help ensure access.

**Speaker – Association of Midwest Museums 7-2020<sup>2</sup>**

Will be presenting “Autism and Museums: More than Sensory Friendly” as a poster presentation at the Association of Midwest Museums’ 2020 conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Topics will include working to make museums more than sensory friendly, connection to other areas of accessibility, emerging technologies for accessibility, among other subjects.

**Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri**

**Bachelor’s of Arts – History, 8/2015 – 5/2019**

Completed comprehensive study in various fields of History. Classes taken include: History and Theory, Crisis and Reform in the Modern City, Red Scares, Andean History, Comparative Slave Systems, and Museums: Planning and Practice. 3.61 Major GPA.

**Intern – Missouri State Archives, 5/2017 – 8/2017**

Interned under the Northeast Region Local Records Archivist on a project to help digitize Circuit Court records across the state. Organized and preserved historical records, as well as analyzed contents to improve data entry for digital catalog.

**Speaker – Missouri Association of Museums and Archives Conference, 10/2017**

Invited to speak at the Missouri Association of Museums and Archives for “The Student Archivist: How Real World Experiences Enhances Study and The Community,” a presentation on experiences related to the internship with the State Archives. Highlighted positives of internship as well as offered potential improvements to internships in general in the field, from the perspective of an intern with fresh experience.

**Exhibit Update – Ruth W. Towne Museum and Visitor’s Center, 01/2018 – 05/2018**

Part of a team of students working to renovate the “Rural Roots” exhibit at the Ruth W. Towne Museum and Visitor’s Center at Truman State University. Helped determine which objects to display, what narrative and interpretive directions should be taken, and assisted in set up of exhibits. Individually responsible for the creation of content, design, editing, and printing of exhibition labels for one

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<sup>2</sup> Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19

section of the exhibit. Also responsible for the centerpiece of the exhibition, detailing central points throughout the exhibition and their significance to Truman State University as an institution.

**Research Assistant – History, 10/2018 – 5/2019**

Worked closely with guiding professor to research Kenyan newspapers on a project analyzing leisure and landlord issues in Kenyan cities, primarily Nairobi and Mombasa. Analyzed content for relevant articles and captures data. Created templates to allow better analysis of articles alongside professor's research and sought out resources unavailable locally over academic resource to expand the breadth of the project.

**Speaker – Student Research Conference, Truman State University,  
4/2019**

Presented “"Contrary to Justice, Humanity, and Policy:" The Slave Trade as an Instrument of British Power, 1803-1820,” at the Truman State University Student Research Conference in April of 2019. This conference showcases exceptional student work which goes above and beyond classroom expectations. This paper is also to be published in the 2019 edition of *The Apprentice Historian*.

## Current Roles

**DFB&T, Inc.**, Wesley Chapel, Florida

**Board Member**, 12/2020-Present

**The Eiteljorg Museum**, Indianapolis, Indiana

**Public Programs Intern**, 08/2020-Present

**The Children's Museum of Indianapolis**, Indianapolis, Indiana

**Volunteer Accessibility Consultant**, 03/2020-Present

**Infiniteach**, Chicago, Illinois

**Volunteer Evaluator**, 12/2019-Present

**Indiana State Museum**, Indianapolis, Indiana

**Volunteer Accessibility Content Designer**, 10/2019-Present

**Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis**, Indianapolis,  
Indiana

**Master of Arts - Museum Studies** 08/2019 – 05/2021

**Indiana University**, Bloomington, Indiana

**Doctor of Philosophy – Special Education** 08/2021 – 05/2025