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Alcatraz East Crime Museum Announces New Summer Exhibits and Graffiti Contest Winners

Alcatraz East Crime Museum will be offering special summer displays, shedding light on the sexual assault crimes involving the USA Gymnastics national team doctor and the 25th anniversary of Nicole Brown Simpson's murder

PIGEON FORGE, Tennessee (June 4, 2019) – This summer Alcatraz East Crime Museum continues to roll out new things for visitors. There will be two special displays, both aimed at providing visitors with information about headline-grabbing cases from both history and current events. The special summer displays focus on the 25th anniversary of Nicole Brown Simpson's murder, as well as the sexual assault crimes that involved the USA Gymnastics team doctor, with over 250 women accusing him of the crimes.

"We try to keep up with important cases that change the national conversation," explains Rachael Penman, director of artifacts and exhibits at Alcatraz East Crime Museum. "Both these cases involve crimes that were hidden for a long time. The more we can share their stories, hopefully more people will find the courage to step forward in their own lives."

Starting June 10, 2019, the Justice System Gallery will add the case against Larry Nassar, who was USA Gymnastics national team doctor from 1996-2014, and a former doctor at Michigan State University. Nassar's repeated violations of underage girls under the guise of medical treatment went back at least 30 years. In 2017, he pled guilty to seven counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct with minors in Ingham County Circuit Court. Judge Rosemarie Aquilina invited accusers to speak during the sentencing phase and over 200 women gave victim impact statements, including Olympians. January 24, 2018 Judge Aquilina sentenced Nassar to 45-175 years in prison.

Alexis Alvarado was a diver and gymnast who was first violated by Nassar when she was 12-years-old and gave a powerful statement before Judge Aquilina. The museum will feature a new display including a blue Michigan leotard that Alvarado used to compete, and her Arthur Ashe Courage Award trophy. Alvarado was among 140 survivors who appeared onstage to receive the honor on July 18, 2018 at the ESPY

Awards in Los Angeles. While other items from Alvarado will be on long-term display, the ESPY trophy will only be on view through the summer.

“It was such an honor to receive the Arthur Ashe Courage Award along with my sister survivors, says Alvarado. “I hope sharing it with the public will help inspire others to speak out and hold offenders and institutions accountable.”

This summer, the museum is also offering a temporary exhibit in memory of Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman. Murdered 25 years ago on June 12, 1994, Nicole would have celebrated her 60th birthday on May 19. Alcatraz East Crime Museum is turning the focus on Nicole with “Passion for Life: Nicole Brown Simpson,” as well as showing the devastating impact of domestic violence. The exhibit includes items that belonged to Nicole, such as favorite pieces of clothing and jewelry, a poem handwritten by Nicole that was read at her funeral, as well as family photos. The exhibit will run through August 17.

Alcatraz East also displays the white Bronco from the slow speed O.J. Simpson chase, which occurred on June 17, 1994 when Simpson fled from an arrest warrant in the murders. Simpson was later found not guilty in the criminal trial, but found liable for both deaths in a civil suit. The museum has other Simpson items on display such as a Buffalo Bills football helmet and ties worn by Simpson at the trial.

On June 1, Alcatraz East held its 2nd Annual Graffiti Art Contest, with eight selected finalists.

“It’s exciting how many talented entries we received this year,” says Summer Saylor, who coordinated the event. “It’s great to be able to bring together local law enforcement and the arts community in a fun atmosphere.”

The top spots went to:

- 1-Charles Key: Nashville, TN
- 2-Leonardo Rodriquez: Pigeon Forge, TN
- 3-William Love: Nashville, TN

The contest guidelines restricted artists to themes in line with the museum’s law enforcement and crime history topics. Winners of the contest will have their panels added to the “graffiti alley” exhibit in the museum later this summer, and received cash prizes of \$750 for first place, \$350 for second place, and \$200 for third place. The judges’ panel included local law enforcement representatives Pigeon Forge Chief of Police Richard Catlett, Sevier County Sheriff Patrol Lt. Nathan Carr, as well as artist Jessica Southerland from Arrowmont School for Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, and Matt Garrabrant of Southern Draw Tattoo Studio in Sevierville.

“The other contestants this year were amazing artists and I'm grateful to have been able to compete in the same space with them, such an honor,” says William Love. “Hope to be able to do it again in the future!”

The museum is always adding to its collection and has a star-studded panel of experts who make up the Advisory Board, including those in law enforcement, collectors, a medical examiner, crime scene investigators, and others. The board includes Jim Willett, a retired prison warden, Anthony Rivera, a combat veteran and Navy SEAL chief, and Judge Belvin Perry, Jr., who is best known for the Casey Anthony trial. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: www.alcatrazeast.com.

About Alcatraz East

Alcatraz East is the most arresting crime museum in the United States. Guests of all ages can encounter a unique journey into the history of American crime, crime solving, and our justice system. Through interactive exhibits and original artifacts, Alcatraz East is an entertaining and educational experience for all ages - so much fun it's a crime! This family attraction is located at the entrance of The Island, located at 2757 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, TN. General admission tickets are \$14.95 for children, \$24.95 for adults. Group ticket sales are available. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., with the last ticket sold 60 minutes before closing. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: www.alcatrazeast.com.

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