

Yale couple establishes Peabody endowment fund

Yale UniversityYale University

Longtime Yale employees Kumpati and Barbara Narendra have established an endowed fund at the University to support the Peabody Museum of Natural History's Mineral and Meteorite Collections.

Barbara Narendra, a Museum Assistant at the Peabody, has worked at Yale for more than 35 years and has devoted her career to the preservation of the Peabody's historically important collection of meteorites and to the Peabody archives. Her encyclopedic knowledge of the Peabody Museum and the evolution of science at Yale have been hailed as a tremendous asset to scholars worldwide. Kumpati Narendra is the Harold W. Cheel Professor of Electrical Engineering and Director of the Center for Systems Science. His research focuses on how nonlinearities, uncertainty, complexity, and time variations play an increasing role in technologies such as robotics, manufacturing, space technology, and medical instrumentation, as well as in older technologies. The Narendras say they have had a great appreciation for the Peabody for many years and recognize its role in advancing ground-breaking research as well as being a place of learning for the Yale and New Haven communities.

"We are proud to support the Peabody Museum as a reflection of the importance of science education in our own lives," said Kumpati Narendra. "Our goal is to provide the Peabody with secure resources to purchase new mineral and meteorite specimens and to further enable the analysis and study of the collection. Minerals and meteorites are vital to our understanding of the Earth as well as other objects within our solar system and the outer reaches of space. Barbara's service to the Museum and my own work at Yale have been extremely rewarding and we are honored to give back to Yale in this way."

The collection in the division of Meteorites and Planetary Science was started in 1807 with pieces of the Weston, Connecticut meteorite, the first recorded fall of a meteorite in the New World, making the Peabody's collection the oldest in the United States. The Division of Mineralogy includes a worldwide collection of over 40,000 specimens, with 36 documented type specimens, which are the actual specimens used to name a new mineral. These collections are used regularly by students and faculty in Geology and Geophysics, Astronomy and other related science departments.

"I am profoundly grateful to the Narendras for their support of these important collections" said Derek Briggs, Director of the Peabody Museum and the G. Evelyn Hutchinson Professor of Geology and Geophysics. "Barbara is a wonderful colleague and we value her work immensely."

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In addition, Briggs noted that “it is enormously uplifting to receive such a generous charitable gift from within the Yale and Peabody family. The Narendras have certainly responded to an essential academic need at Yale by supporting the mineral and meteorite collections. Specimens are accessed by students, faculty and visiting scholars for research purposes while others are displayed within our Hall of Minerals, Earth and Space. Funding from donors like the Narendras has become even more important to sustaining our collections, programs, and exhibits, especially as we move forward with the plans for a major restoration of the Dinosaur and Mammal halls.”

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