

# GALLAUDET TODAY

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Year-long  
Sesquicentennial  
Celebration begins

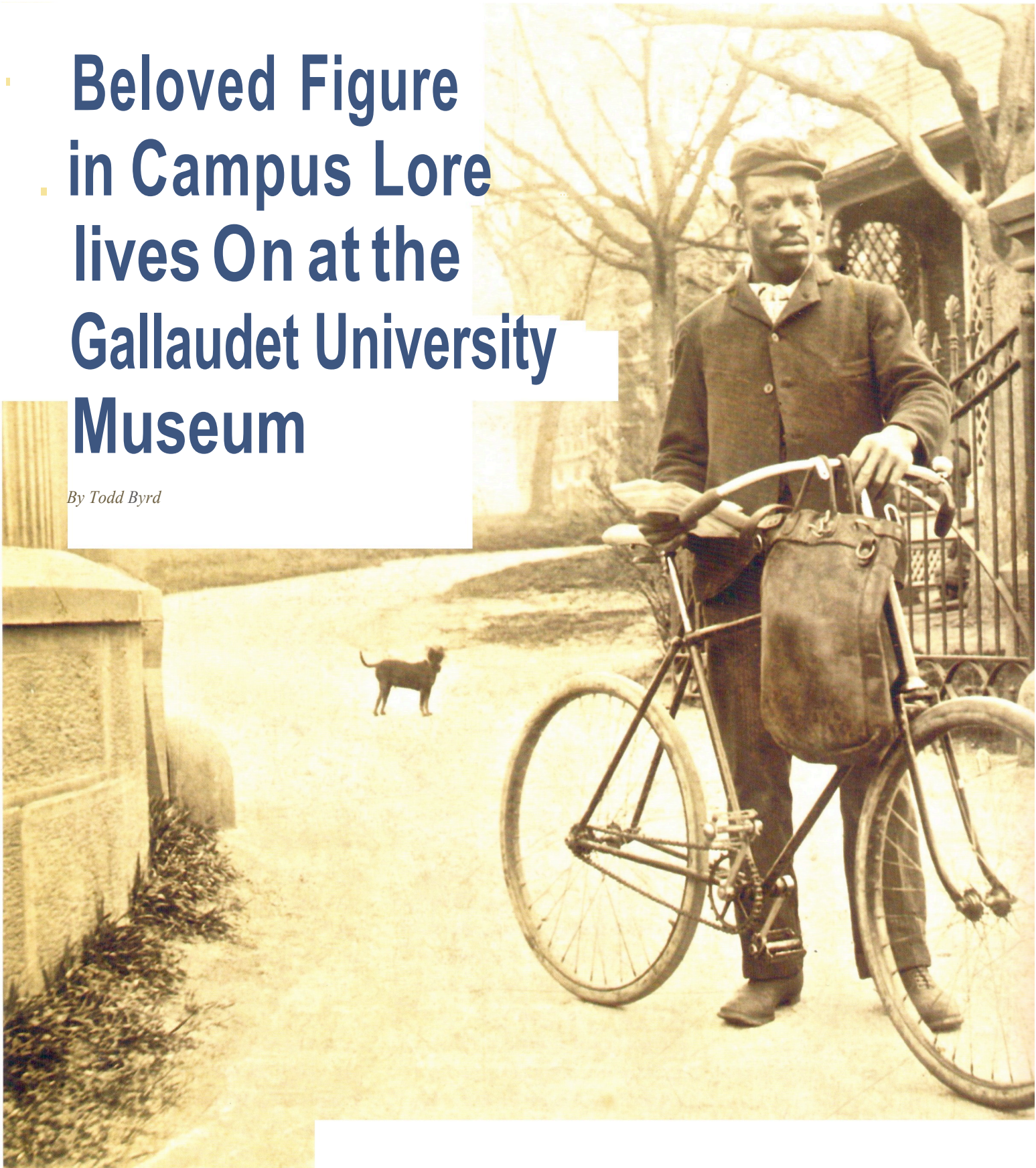
Gallaudet Museum  
exhibition will be  
major event of 150th  
anniversary celebration

**“...you are a legend”  
A Beloved Campus  
Figure Lives On**



# Beloved Figure in Campus Lore lives On at the Gallaudet University Museum

*By Todd Byrd*







Douglas Craig prepares to make his daily run to the U.S. Post Office, located near Union Station, circa 1880s. Another campus legend, "Diamond," immortalized as the Little Iron Dog that can be found in the Office of the President, is believed to be the dog pictured in the background. Extensive research on both of these important figures in Gallaudet history is being conducted by the Gallaudet University Museum with support from the University Archives.

Gallaudet takes great pride in its heritage, enjoying a rich culture shared by few universities anywhere in the world. This culture is based in part on its beautiful campus and its renowned presidents and other visionary leaders. However, the countless everyday people who lived, worked, and studied on campus over the almost 150 years since the University's founding must not be overlooked, for their unique contributions have made indelible marks on the tapestry of Gallaudet's history.

One of these individuals spent his early years as a homeless black deaf boy who wandered the streets of Washington, D.C., not knowing his parents, not even his name or age, and sleeping in alleys and doorways, but later became a legendary figure on Kendall Green.

The boy's plight was made known to Aaron Harrison Cragin, a U.S. senator from New Hampshire and an acquaintance of Gallaudet's first president, Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet. Cragin brought the boy to the college in 1871 to see what Gallaudet could do to help him. Gallaudet took the youngster in, gave him the first name Douglas, after the famous abolitionist and social reformer Frederick Douglas, and the last name Cragin -later shortened to Craig-after the man who found him. The college remained the central focus of his life from that point until his death in 1936. During this time, he was known and beloved by everyone on campus, and the tales about him are so plentiful they could easily fill a book.

The story and photos of Mr. Craig

that appear in this issue of *Gallaudet Today*, as well as those of many other members of the Gallaudet community, will live on in the new Gallaudet University Museum, opening in Chapel Hall this April with an exhibition entitled *Gallaudet at 150 and Beyond*, a major and permanent endeavor commemorating the University's sesquicentennial in 2014. The exhibit is being designed by Scott Carollo, a professor in the Department of Art, Communication, and Theatre. The museum is being developed with support from the University; Jack, '59, and Rosalyn, '59, Gannon, honorary museum chairs; and First Lady Vicki Hurwitz, honorary chair of the Friends of Gallaudet University Museum. The Friends are dedicated alumni and others who share a great love for the University and understand the vital resource the museum will be in sharing with the world the importance of deaf history. (See related story in the "Invest in the Future" column, page 45.)

The histories of Craig and three more of the University's most cherished traditions -the Iron Dog, the Tower Clock, and Chapel Hall-are currently being compiled in a curatorial book by Dr. Jane Norman, '68, museum director and curator and a professor in the Department of Art, Communication, and Theater, with Justin Shaw, '99, photography research assistant. Norman credits an article by Dr. Marieta Joyner in *A Fair Chance in the Race for Life: The Role of Gallaudet University in Deaf History*, edited by Dr. Brian

Greenwald and Dr. John Van Cleve, for background on Craig. She also praises the University Archives for its unequalled role, not only in collecting and preserving the writings and the photos about these figures in campus history, but all of the painstaking measures it takes to document the history of Gallaudet University and the deaf community. She added that the Archives is developing a digital timeline of milestone events in Gallaudet's history, which will be part of the sesquicentennial exhibition.

"We have a responsibility to tell the stories of the people, places, and things that made distinct and lasting impressions on Gallaudet," said Norman." The museum is an extremely important resource for the University as a means to share these fascinating details with present and future generations of people- deaf and hearing alike; otherwise our histories, cultures, and sign languages are in danger of being forgotten." In Craig's case, "Gallaudet made a difference in his life-and he in turn had a big influence on Gallaudet," said Norman. "It is also important for people to know that the people who had a major impact on Gallaudet were not all white, and that we are enriched tremendously by our diversity."

One of the first things Gallaudet did after taking in his young charge was to enroll him at Kendall School. The boy grew remarkably fast, soon



Craig and his wife, Katie Jones, in 1921, soon after their wedding.

towering over the other children, and after eight years in the school, his size and notable strength led him to the first of his many jobs on campus. Craig was given the title "Lawn Hand," and his living quarters were above the Carriage House, which was located near where the Andrew Foster Auditorium stands today. Predictably, he grew up to be a tall, powerful man-it is said that vice president and faculty member Dr. Charles Ely, G-1892, once called Craig

the strongest man he ever knew. It seemed that he did the tasks of several men. In addition to mowing grass, raking leaves, shoveling snow, fixing leaking pipes, and hauling students' heavy luggage to their dormitory rooms, Craig's duties included raising and lowering the American flag each day, winding the Tower Clock, riding his bicycle daily to the U.S. Post Office-in those days located near Union Station-to pick up the University's evening mail, and hoisting and lowering the weighty drapes on the Chapel Hall stage for lectures and performances. He was also entrusted with the rather clandestine job of slipping notes between male and female students.

Known for his sense of humor, Craig was a notorious prankster, although he was never known to tease female students. One of his jobs was to lug students' bulky trunks from the railroad station to campus. If the trunk belonged to a new student, Craig would demand a dollar for the service, and if the student refused to pay, Craig would assume his most fearsome stance, which inevitably persuaded the individual to hand over the fee. Later, he would encounter the student on campus and benignly produce the same dollar from his wallet and return it. Another trick was for upperclassmen to introduce new students to Craig as "Instructor in Lip Reading." Craig would then take on a professorial look,



adjust his eyeglasses, and commence to deliberately talk gibberish. The panicked youth would then confess to be unable to read even one word, whereupon Craig would sternly inform him that it was with much regret that he would have to report him to President Gallaudet.

Craig had such a reputation as a handyman extraordinaire that the students gave him the honorary title, "Master of Mechanics," which explains references to him as "Craig MM" that appear frequently in handwritten notes and publications such as *The Buff and Blue* that Norman and Shaw have collected in her research.

In fact, Craig was such a hard worker that the thought of taking a vacation was a concept that never crossed his mind. When he was finally convinced to take a few days off, he traveled to Norfolk, Va. There, he learned that the Naval Shipyard in the adjoining city of Portsmouth needed laborers, and he spent his remaining time working on the docks. He came home with a sizable amount of money, and allowed that he'd had a splendid "vacation."

Although work gave Craig immense satisfaction, there was something missing in his life: he longed for a wife. He was known for frequenting the Kendall Green kitchen, with a ready proposal for the cooks to marry him. Alas, there were no takers among this group, but his persistence eventually paid off and he married Katie Jones, a deaf Washingtonian, in 1920 at Calvary

Episcopal Church, located near campus at 1st and G streets, NE, and many members of the Gallaudet community were present for the ceremony. The happy couple went to Baltimore, Md., to honeymoon, but misfortune struck when the \$300 Craig was carrying was lost or stolen, and he and his new wife returned to Washington the next day.

After their marriage, Craig and his wife lived in various rented homes near campus. Craig was never good at managing money, and President Gallaudet had to intervene with

death and 65 years after he arrived on campus. When he died, Gallaudet's second president, Dr. Percival Hall, G-1893, sent a telegram to Edward Miner Gallaudet's daughter, Katherine Gallaudet, informing him of the college's loss. Craig's funeral was held in Chapel Hall, and he was buried in Mt. Harmony Cemetery, located off of Rhode Island Avenue. In 1960, Craig's was one of approximately 37,000 graves that were relocated to National Harmony Memorial Park in Landover, Md.

## "Gallaudet made a difference in his life-and he in turn had a big influence on Gallaudet."

-Dr. Jane Norman

landlords on several occasions to help Craig keep his payments up to date, but all parties were patient with him due to his kind and loving nature, and he always settled his debts. Gallaudet also intervened on at least one occasion by contacting a landlord on Craig's behalf to request that he address serious repairs needed to a home he owned that Craig was renting.

Craig's last task for his beloved campus community came after his retirement when he was called back for the honor of raising the flag for a new flagpole at College Hall given by the Class of 1935. The ceremony took place in September, five months before his

The sentiment that generations who lived, worked, and studied at Gallaudet felt toward Craig can be summed up in a poem written by Felix Kowalewski, '37, that appeared in a literary issue of *The Buff and Blue*: "He mended leaky faucets, broken windows, broken hearts-in diverse ways . . . And those who knew him well can still remember his great broad shoulders, how he'd lift and carry a massive trunk, with ease, high up the staircase . . . Douglas-you are dead and buried, but your presence haunts the great staircase-and the stories of your great strength . . . live on forever-you are a legend."