

A.E. BACKUS MUSEUM & GALLERY

500 North Indian River Drive
Fort Pierce, Florida 34950
info@BackusMuseum.org • www.BackusMuseum.org
772.465.0630



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“WE REMEMBER BACKUS” PANEL DISCUSSION EXPLORES THE INSPIRING STORIES AND ENDURING INFLUENCE OF THE BELOVED FLORIDA ARTIST AT THE TREASURE COAST HISTORY FESTIVAL

Fort Pierce, FL – January 2, 2020 - The A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery will present a panel discussion entitled “We Remember Backus” as a session in the fourth annual Treasure Coast History Festival on Saturday, January 11, 2020. The panel discussion will start at 1:00 pm in the Sunrise Theatre’s Black Box Theatre located at 117 South 2nd Street in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce. Admission is free and no reservations are required, though seating is on a first-come, first served basis.

The year 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the death of noted Florida regional artist A.E. “Bean” Backus (1906-1990), who was born and lived in Fort Pierce. With a career spanning more than 70 years, Backus was the first Florida-born artist to build his professional renown by painting the landscape and scenes from daily life of his native state. He was fortunate to have known great success during his lifetime, with paintings hanging in the businesses and the private collections of many of Florida’s most prominent citizens. A renowned humanitarian who abhorred the racist attitudes and segregation that engulfed the region, Backus taught and mentored the group of entrepreneurial African American artists who became known as the Florida Highwaymen. Their inspiring story is part of the A.E. Backus legacy.

The discussion, moderated by the Museum’s Executive Director, J. Marshall Adams, will explore the historical significance and the abiding impact of the artist’s life on those who remember him, and how those who never knew him can learn from his example as an artist and as an altruist, who quietly used his skills and reputation to make the world a better place. The session will feature Mary “Baby” Backus Clapp (the artist’s surviving niece) with family memories; Doretha Hair Truesdell, the widow of Backus protégé and original Highwaymen artist Alfred Hair; and Jacqueline Schindehette, noted student of Backus who was with him in his final hours. Other guests will also share their memories of the artist.

Individuals are welcome to contribute their own personal stories and photographs as memories of Bean Backus online, for possible sharing on stage and for preserving this important local history. Please visit www.indianrivermagazine.com/we-remember-backus/ to offer the special, funny, or important ways you remember A.E. Backus.

The fourth annual Treasure Coast History Festival brings the rich and fascinating past of the Treasure Coast to life on Saturday, January 11 in downtown Fort Pierce, in front of the Sunrise Theatre. The festival begins at 9:00 a.m., with historical re-enactors ranging from Seminole War soldiers from the 1800s to early settlers in the 1900s depicting life on the Treasure Coast, while authors of books on local

history subjects will be spotlighted in the Authors Alley. In addition to the “We Remember Backus” program at 1:00 p.m., additional sessions will include “Billy Johnson’s Fort Pierce” at 9:30 a.m., and “The Ais Natives of the Treasure Coast” by archaeologist Alan Brech at 11:00 a.m.

Free and open to the public, the Treasure Coast History Festival is produced by Indian River Magazine Inc. in association with Main Street Fort Pierce, Sunrise Ford and Sunrise Volkswagen, the St. Lucie County Historical Society, the A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery and the Sunrise Theatre. For more information on the festival, please visit www.indianrivermagazine.com/treasure-coast-history-festival/

On view at the A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery beginning January 8 is the new exhibition ***Driving Force: Alfred Hair and the Florida Highwaymen***, featuring more than 50 works by original Highwaymen Alfred Hair, James Gibson, Willie Daniels, Mary Ann Carroll, Harold Newton, Sam Newton, and more. The exhibition explores through luminous images the dream and determination of these important African American artists. The exhibition is curated by Roger Lightle. ***Driving Force: Alfred Hair and the Florida Highwaymen*** is on view January 8 – February 16, 2020. For more information, please visit www.BackusMuseum.org.

About the A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery

With a recently added, multi-million dollar expansion, the A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery houses the nation’s largest public presentation of artwork by Florida’s preeminent painter, A.E. “Bean” Backus (1906-1990), and is home to the state’s only permanent multimedia exhibition on the Florida Highwaymen. In addition to preserving and perpetuating the artistic and humanitarian legacy of Backus, the Museum organizes and hosts changing exhibitions from artists of national and international acclaim.

Regular Hours are: Wednesday – Saturday, 10 AM to 4 PM; Sunday, 12 Noon to 4 PM (closed Monday-Tuesday). Admission is \$5 per person; AARP, AAA, and Veterans with appropriate ID receive a \$2 discount. Students with school ID, children under 18, active duty military, and current members are always free. During the regular season, the first Sunday of the month is Free Admission Day.

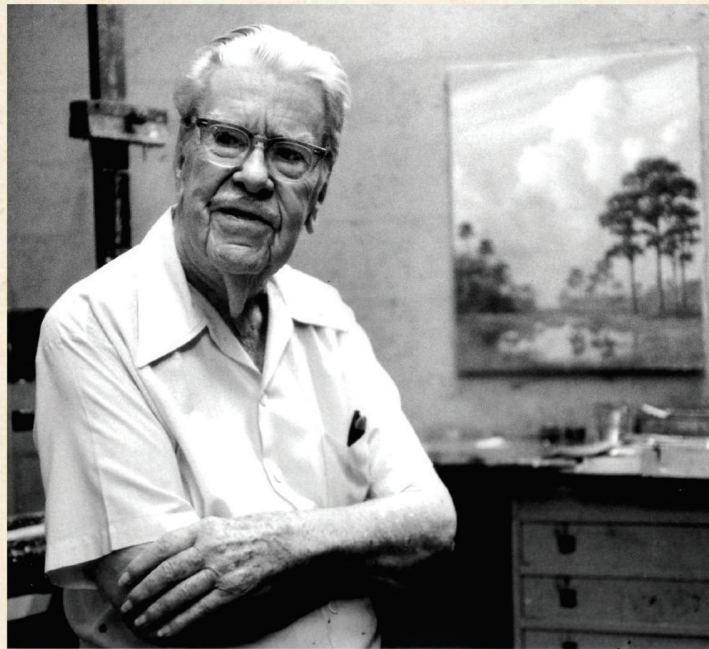
A.E. BACKUS MUSEUM & GALLERY
500 North Indian River Drive • Fort Pierce, Florida 34950
info@BackusMuseum.org • www.BackusMuseum.org

###

*Indian River Magazine and
the Backus Museum & Gallery
present*

‘We Remember Backus’

As the 30th anniversary of his death approaches, relatives, friends and students recall the life of Florida’s preeminent landscape artist, A.E. “Bean” Backus, of Fort Pierce and how he inspired generations of art students and the Highwaymen movement.



1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11

Black Box, Sunrise Theatre

Downtown Fort Pierce

Backus Reunion Reception Afterward

Presented as part of the annual Treasure Coast History Festival

To participate, sponsor or for information about the session
call 772.940.9005 or email festival@indianrivermag.com