

The Giovale Open Deck Observatory

Credit: Nate Nise



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



LOWELL OBSERVATORY FOUNDATION

Sustaining and enhancing Lowell Observatory's mission of research and education by generating perpetual financial support.

Letter from the Foundation Chair



Donna Weistrop, PhD

Dear Friends of the Lowell Observatory Foundation,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well. I am pleased to share with you the Lowell Observatory Foundation's Annual Report for 2022. There have been some changes in the membership of the Foundation Board in 2022. After three years of dedicated service, John Menke has stepped down from the Board. We thank John for his service to the Foundation and wish him well in his future endeavors. We have the great good fortune to add to the Board, Camille Bibles, who currently serves as a U.S. Magistrate Judge and the only federal judge located in Northern Arizona. Before assuming the bench, Judge Bibles litigated in state, federal, and international courts, and we look forward to her insight in future discussions.

Also in 2022, Lowell Putnam, the sole trustee of the Lowell Observatory, established the Lowell Prize Postdoctoral Fellowships. These fellowships will support young scientists for four years, and are a good way to call attention to the observatory, recruit new faculty, and bring in fresh ideas. The Percival Lowell Trust will support the first group of four fellows, one per year funded through year four. The Foundation unanimously voted to establish an endowment to support subsequent Lowell Prize Fellowships to maintain the program beyond the support from the Percival Lowell Trust. Anyone interested in donating to support the Lowell Prize Postdoctoral Fellowships or any other Foundation endowments, can find more information on the Lowell Observatory Foundation website.

There were also some visual changes for the Foundation in 2022. As you may have noticed, we have updated the Foundation logo. Work was also begun to refresh and update the Foundation website (foundation.lowell.edu).

2022 was a difficult year for the stock market and the Foundation did not escape the effects of that. We began 2022 with a \$10.6 M endowment and ended it with \$9.1 M. Between 2019 and 2021 there was a \$3.9 M investment gain, so that we have 'given back' half of that gain. The Foundation was still able to distribute 4% of the endowment, approximately \$352K, to support the research and public outreach programs of the observatory. Foundation distributions to the observatory included support for a new transit van, to be used to transport instruments to the telescopes, and transport visitors and personnel as needed.

As we exit from the recent pandemic and attempt to get back to 'normal', we are grateful to you and all of our loyal supporters who continue to donate to the Lowell Observatory Foundation and make possible the success of the Foundation and the Lowell Observatory. Thank-you. •

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Weistrop".

Donna Weistrop
Chair, Lowell Observatory Foundation



Millennium Fund

By Michael Beckage, Chair of the Lowell Observatory Advisory Board

The Lowell Observatory Millennium Fund is an important endowment and funding resource for Lowell Observatory, but why are we talking about this in the Lowell Observatory Foundation annual report? To answer that question, we need to understand the history of the Millennium Fund.

The fund was established by Frances McAllister and others in 2000 as a funding vehicle independent from the Percival Lowell Trust. The origin of and purpose for the Millennium Fund are stated in the bylaws of the Lowell Observatory Advisory Board as follows:

“In addition to its members’ reasonable availability for individual consultation by the Trustee, Trust Administrator or Director of Lowell Observatory, or any of their designees, the Executive Committee is particularly charged with the oversight, use of proceeds from, and general well-being of the Lowell Observatory Millennium Fund, which was established by the late Frances McAllister and others, for the exclusive benefit of Lowell Observatory. This charge grants the Executive Committee full power to do all things in connection with said fund, including but not limited to: solicitation for the increase of its corpus, management of its portfolio, spending from its earnings or principal and its dissolution. The Chairperson shall report annually to the Full Advisory Board.”

The effort to establish the Millennium Fund was a bold move intended to diversify the financial base of Lowell Observatory by providing a path for interested donors to support the observatory via a fund managed by the Executive Committee

of the Advisory Board. Prior to the Millennium Fund, gifts could be made via the Friends of the Observatory, but there was no way to contribute to an endowment for the long-term benefit of Lowell Observatory. The concept behind the Millennium Fund was and is very much in keeping with the spirit of the Lowell Observatory Foundation today.

The Millennium Fund had existed for many years when the Lowell Observatory Foundation was established in 2015. During discussions between the Foundation trustees and the Executive Committee of the Advisory Board, the decision was made to pool the Millennium Fund with other funds that are part of the Foundation. The Foundation funds are currently managed by Vigilant Capital and the Millennium Fund currently has a value of close to \$2 million.

Let us get to the best part of this story. As with any dynamic organization, Lowell Observatory is periodically faced with unexpected expenses that are not in the budget. At these times, the Executive Director or Chief Operations Officer of the observatory can make a funding request for consideration by the Executive Committee. Through careful management over the years, the investment returns of Millennium Fund have allowed the Executive Committee to approve



support for numerous diverse projects around the Lowell campus and beyond. Projects have included everything from plumbing and heating repairs to offsetting the cost of employee relocations and management training. Total coverage of unbudgeted or emergency expenses has totaled approximately \$750,000 since 2012.

Bottom line: The Lowell Observatory Millennium Fund plays an important role at Lowell Observatory and helps smooth-out inevitable bumps in the financial road. Many thanks to the progressive leaders who established the fund and to the Lowell Observatory Foundation Trustees and Executive Committee members for making it all work together for the good of Lowell Observatory! •

Mars Hill Fund Growth

By Lisa Actor, Foundation Executive Director

Visitors describe Mars Hill as a serene, park-like oasis overlooking Flagstaff.

The beauty of the Lowell campus is no accident. The observatory's facilities and grounds crew work diligently, across all four seasons, to create a serene ambiance for astronomical viewing. The Foundation's Mars Hill Fund provides annual income so that the observatory's campus will generate those positive feelings among guests in perpetuity.

The Mars Hill Fund has experienced nearly 50% growth since 2021, the

year we dedicated the Lowell Observatory Columbarium. Set apart, in a quiet glen of scrub oaks with views of the San Francisco Peaks, the columbarium provides a place of peace and reflection for the cremains of friends of Lowell Observatory. Anyone who reserves a niche in the columbarium is asked to donate to the Mars Hill Fund to ensure that the columbarium and its environs will be maintained with the same care as the rest of Mars Hill. We are grateful to those friends of Mars Hill for their contribution to the Fund. •

Lowell Observatory Columbarium



Bequests of Real Estate

By Stephen Riggs, Senior Philanthropy Manager

When reading about making a bequest, most people immediately envision leaving someone or an organization an amount of cash through a will. While this is the most common form of bequest, there are others that can be of great value to both the donor and the recipient. One such bequest is a gift of real estate.

Lowell Observatory has received several greatly beneficial bequests of real estate in the past few years. Most gifts of real estate are sold and the proceeds are used for Lowell operations or for specific purposes like an endowed fund if the donor so designates. Occasionally, though, we have kept the property and used it for observatory purposes. One instance of retaining a bequest property occurred a few years ago when a supporter who owned a cabin and several acres adjacent to existing Lowell property near the Lowell Discovery Telescope (LDT) told us that concerns about what to do with the property had been weighing on her mind. She willed the property to the observatory and we were able to use the cabin as an upgraded telescope operators lodge, and then sell the excess acreage to add a considerable sum to help fund observatory operations. Another recent gift of property was sold and its proceeds used to supplement the Percival Lowell Trust in support of the Observatory.

When making a bequest of real estate, it is helpful to not only include the address of

the property, but also the legal description of it, which can be found in the title or deed documents. An example of bequest language can be as simple as:

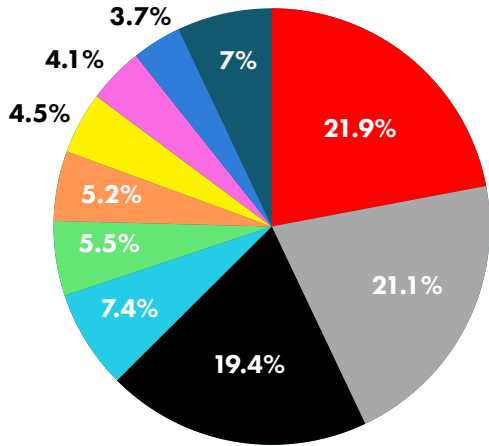
I hereby give, devise and bequeath all of the right, title, and interest in and to the real estate located at ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY to the Lowell Observatory Foundation, a nonprofit organization located at 1400 W. Mars Hill Rd, Flagstaff, AZ, 86001, Federal Tax ID #47-2052113, for the Lowell Observatory Foundation's general use and purpose. (Or for a specific purpose like a specified endowed fund.)

There are, of course caveats about real estate gifts, and Lowell Observatory has guidelines for real estate acceptance to help avoid ownership of unsuitable properties. The majority of real estate bequests, though, have proven extremely beneficial to furthering the mission of the observatory. •



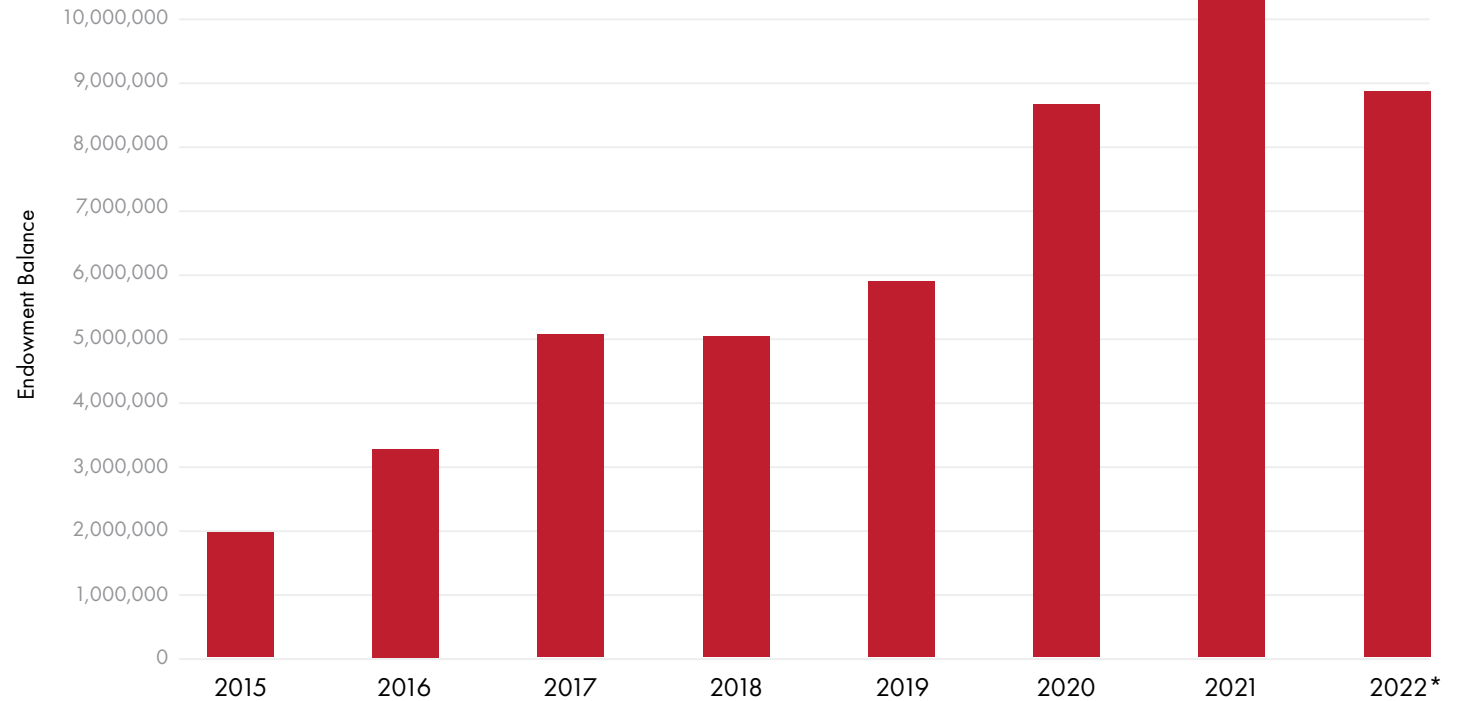
Foundation Endowment Growth

Current Endowment by Funds



- Millennium Fund **(21.9%)**
- Reserve Fund** **(21.1%)**
- Exploration Fund **(19.4%)**
- Instrumentation Fund **(7.4%)**
- Giovale Endowed Fund for Astronomical Research **(5.5%)**
- GODO Endowment Fund **(5.2%)**
- Native American Astronomy Outreach Fund **(4.5%)**
- Robert M. Ayers Education Fund **(4.1%)**
- Marcus Cometary Research Fund **(3.7%)**
- Everything Else **(7%)**

Eight-Year Endowment Growth



Investment and Spending Strategies

The Foundation's hope is to annually increase the portfolio's asset value at least by the amount of the annual distribution rate, plus fees and expenses. We currently spend 4% of each fund's balance as averaged over the last twelve quarters.

*Diminished growth year because of a downward trend in the stock market.

**The Reserve Fund was created by the Board of the Lowell Observatory Foundation in 2020. Funds transferred into the Reserve Fund come from unrestricted gifts to the Lowell Observatory Foundation. The Reserve Fund is a quasi-endowment which means only the Board may place funds into the Reserve Fund and only the Board may take money out of the Reserve Fund. Allocations from the Reserve Fund are available for any uses consistent with the mission of Lowell Observatory, including ongoing operating expenses, in perpetuity.

Percival Lowell Postdoctoral Fellow

By Lisa Actor, Foundation Executive Director

Lowell Observatory has always had a special place in Dr. Tyler Richey-Yowell's heart. She says, "For years, when people asked me what I wanted to do with an Astrophysics degree, I said, 'I'd like to work for someplace like Lowell Observatory,' and now I work exactly someplace like Lowell Observatory!"



As the first Percival Lowell Postdoctoral Fellow, Dr. Richey-Yowell, pictured here at Mauna Kea in Hawaii, is an integral part of the Lowell community. In addition to her research on the

habitability of planets orbiting

around K Stars, she serves on the committee of Lowell scientists and educators planning the programming for the Universe Theater in the future Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation Astronomy Discovery Center. "There is just so much history, curiosity, and excitement about the universe at Lowell that you can't help but feel inspired when you are here," says Richey-Yowell.

The Lowell Observatory Foundation created the Percival Lowell Postdoctoral Fellowship Fund to support innovative new scientists, like Richey-Yowell, as they embark on their careers in astronomical and planetary research. Percival Lowell Fellows receive four years of employment and access to cutting edge instrumentation to help launch their careers as professional scientists. The Foundation welcomes gifts to this endowment. •

Lowell Observatory Foundation Funds

Science Research & Exploration

Exploration Fund

Supports Lowell scientists and their inquiries.

Instrumentation Fund

Gives Lowell scientists access to innovative telescopes and instrumentation.

Giovale Endowed Fund for Astronomical Research

Provides annual funding for Lowell scientists' astronomical research.

Marcus Cometary Research Fund

Encourages Lowell scientists' studies of comets and the resources to share their results with others.

Percival Lowell Postdoctoral Fellowship Fund

A competitive award that provide resources and access to astronomical instrumentation to help new postdoc scholars and researchers launch their careers as professional scientists.

STEM Education & Community Outreach

Inspiration Fund

Helps support the observatory's popular daytime tours, nighttime telescope viewing, and kids' STEM camps.

Native American Astronomy Outreach Program Fund

Supports hands-on STEM learning to encourage Native American students to imagine themselves as scientists.

Robert M. Ayers Education Fund

Provides funding for K-12 school children to visit Lowell Observatory.

Young Scholars Fund

Provides Lowell research experiences for students, from undergraduates to postdocs.

Edith Waddell Fund

Provides summer, student internships in the Lowell public outreach program.

Mars Hill Campus & Facilities

GODO Endowment Fund

Maintains and updates the Giovale Open Deck Observatory and its telescopes for nightly dark sky viewers.

ADC Endowment Fund

Maintains and renews the Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation Astronomy Discovery Center and its programs to the delight of visitors.

Historic Preservation Fund

Preserves the historic logbooks, glass plates, and antique documents and instruments archived in the Putnam Collection Center.

Mars Hill Fund

Keeps the Mars Hill campus maintained and looking beautiful.

Funds with Few Restrictions

Lowell Observatory Endowment Fund

Annual distributions from this fund are available for any purpose consistent with the mission of Lowell Observatory.

Millennium Fund

This fund provides annual distributions for observatory priorities outlined by the Director and approved by the Lowell Observatory Executive Committee.

Support Fund *

A fund that receives unrestricted funds received by the Foundation.

*Non-endowed

You are welcome to contribute to any existing fund. Or talk with us about creating a new fund. Funds for which there are no restrictions are often the most useful!

Board of Trustees

Chair

Donna Weistrop, PhD

Trustees

Honorable Camille D. Bibles	Marjorie McClanahan
Stephen Brown, PhD	John Menke
David Chase, PhD	George Putnam III
Ginger Giovale	W. Lowell Putnam
Teri Kelley	

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