



The year was 1999.



A gallon of gas was \$1.22 and an average movie ticket was less than \$5. The nearly forgotten website, MySpace, introduced us to social media online. And in the month of June, the Washington Pavilion of Arts and Science was eager to open their doors. While the doors did not officially open until June 1, the Washington Pavilion presented several programs around the city in 1998 to demonstrate what would be happening once the Pavilion officially opened. These events included many additional engagement activities, and there were over 30 community partners and sponsors. What a great way to blend a series of programs featuring visual and performing arts and sciences.

After barely getting enough votes in a ballot measure in October 1999, it was unknown whether the renovation of the oldest high school in South Dakota would successfully become a hub for arts, science and community entertainment. Twenty years later the dream of a few visionary community members has flourished into a staple of the Sioux Falls community, even referred to by many as the “Crown Jewel” of downtown Sioux Falls. Providing a place for people all throughout our region to appreciate magnificent artworks in our Visual Arts Center, spend a day of hands-on learning in our Kirby Science Discovery Center, and enjoy a performance in our world-renowned Mary W. Sommervold Hall; the Washington Pavilion has truly captured the spirit of community.

An estimated 5.5 million people have walked through the doors of the Washington Pavilion since opening day in June 1999. Over 2.8 million tickets have been sold to over 5,000 performances. Over 2 million children and adults have stretched their minds in our Kirby Science Discovery Center. And our Visual Arts Center has brought in more than 350 art exhibitions, ranging from Norman Rockwell to local artists. Tens of thousands of young children have attended and participated in hundreds of camps, classes and workshops administered by the Pavilion’s award-winning education program.

Here are a few words from the Steve Hoffman, the Pavilion’s very first President & CEO:

“When I arrived in Sioux Falls in 1997 as the Pavilion’s first executive director and CEO, I relied on one mantra to guide me through the prenatal and infancy stages of the Washington Pavilion: How can we establish systems and programs, today, so that our future generation leaders and community members will be in the best shape possible? In the 10+ years I served the Pavilion, I had the distinct pleasure to work with so many amazing community leaders - board members, co-workers and citizens, alike. What affected me most was the passion everyone at the Pavilion had and the desire to use its programming to further build the overall community. In an effort to show the synergy of the organization, we presented a Broadway touring production of BYE BYE BIRDIE featuring Troy Donahue; original STOMP dancer, Sean Curran; science-based guitarist and fiber artist, Robert & Rebecca Bluestone; and theatre duo Rajeckas & Intraub. I am so proud of everyone associated with the Washington Pavilion, past and present, for continuing to provide great education, engagement and entertainment.”

Steven A. Hoffman
President & CEO
1997-2007

To say your Washington Pavilion of Arts and Science has had an impact on Sioux Falls would be a vast understatement. The Pavilion has had a strong first twenty years. The next twenty promise to launch beyond our expectations due, in large part, to this strong foundation.

Thank you for your continued support. None of this would be possible without you!

