

For Official Release

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Harvard Museum Oceania Curator Dr. Ingrid Ahlgren Visits



Governor Lemanu P.S. Mauga's Office, via Chief of Staff, Samoan Affairs, Constitution Office, Arts Council, Am. Samoa Community College, Jean P. Haydon Museum, Am. Samoa Historic Preservation Office, Feleti Barstow Library, ASG Archives and Records and the friends of the Museum, welcomed Harvard Museum Oceania Curator Dr. Ingrid Ahlgren to American Samoa last week December 7-11th. Dr. Ahlgren was in the Samoas to open a dialogue with traditional chiefs and dignitaries, academics, curators, archaeologists, librarians, archivists, artists, students and the general public community about a Harvard Fellowship project, educational opportunities, and, to share information about the Samoan objects and photographs held at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Upon her arrival on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, she proceeded to the Jean P. Haydon Museum and gave an afternoon powerpoint presentation to an interested audience that included representatives from Samoan Affairs, ASHPO, Arts Council, Constitution Office, JPH Museum Board, friends of the Museum, ASG Archives and the general public. Dr. Ahlgren spoke about the reason for her visit by elaborating on a recent Harvard project that brought mainland Pacific Islanders together to examine and interact with their traditional material cultures. The project is called the Harvard Oceanic Collections Engagement Fellowship (HOCEF) and will be expanding to the Pacific Islands soon.

Scholarship and Educational opportunities at Harvard were also described for students interested in pursuing Cultural Resource Management (CRM). Her presentation displayed many Samoan objects from the 18th – 19th century of Explorers, Whaling, Missionary and Trader periods; with others from the late 19th Century Foreign Powers Period, including some that are apparently associated with the Mataafa, Malietoa, and Tuimanu'a paramount chief families. A quantity of Samoan images from the 1880-90's popular photography period was also shared.

After the presentation, several questions about the dimensions, origins and conservation of the objects

came from the audience and led to conversations about museum policy and protocol towards objects affiliated with traditional customs and historical families, such as the unfolding and conservation of fine toga mats.

At the end of the discussion, Dr. Ahlgren presented several cordial gifts to the Governor's Office, Arts Council, Museum Board and Samoan Affairs attaches that were graciously received. Two large publication volumes of Harvard's Samoan collection were also presented to the Governor's Office and the Jean P. Haydon Museum Board. Refreshments followed, and mingling continued with curious attendees sharing perceptions and impressions of Harvard's Samoan objects. In the evening, Dr. Ahlgren was invited to a traditional women's tattoo "Samana" ceremony by Museum Board Representative Reggie Meredith. She was also a special guest of the Governor's Office at the 2022 Arts Council Xmas Holiday event at Tafuna Park, where she conversed with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor about her visit.



Fine Toga Mat of Tuimanu'a? c1900.



Alia model of Mataafa exile.



Malietao T. mat - 1899 Adm. Kautz c1898.



On Thursday, Dec 8th, the American Samoa Community College kindly reserved an afternoon Lecture Hall session for faculty, students and the general public. A fair crowd gathered to see and hear her second presentation and many questions and conversations arose. It was a thought-provoking exchange that led to several new insights about the objects and photographs at Harvard. Afterwards the ASCC President and

faculty kindly gifted a number of ASCC Samoan publications to Dr. Ahlgren for the Harvard Peabody Museum Library. Afterwards a group photo of some of the audience was taken.



On Friday, December 9th, Dr. Ahlgren found time to visit the Am. Samoa Historic Preservation Office, ASG Archives, the Am. Samoa Power Authority Archeology Lab and the Feleti Barstow Library Pacific Collection Room. American Samoa's Cultural Resource Directors were happy to meet with her to share their accomplishments, challenges and adaptations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the ASG Archives, archival documents, historical displays and early Samoan photographs and catalogs were examined, along with replicas of the Tutuila and Manu'a Deeds of Cession and the 1967 Constitution. In the afternoon, the Territorial Librarian welcomed Dr. Ahlgren and escorts with fragrant necklaces of gardenia, *laumale* and *laga'ali*; along with several island gifts contributed by the library staff. In return, Dr. Ahlgren left two newly printed volumes of the Harvard Samoan Objects and Photos: one for the Feleti Library and one for the Am. Samoa Community College Pacific Collections library. (These are also freely available online at <https://collections.peabody.harvard.edu/groups/oce--samoa>)

Saturday, December 10th, was Dr. Ahlgren's last day before traveling to the Independent State of Samoa to resume meetings and appointments with Cultural Resource Managers and Artists. Those meetings had been interrupted by last week's Seaquake Tsunami alert. She conveyed many thanks to her hosts before leaving: Chief of Staff Loa Tuimavave Laupola; Samoan Affairs Deputy Secretary Tauese Va'a Sunia; Arts Council Director Fuata Tiumalu; Constitution Office Tapaau Dan Aga; ASCC President Rosevonne Pato; Territorial Librarian Emma Penn; Pacific Room Keeper Loring Faiivae; ASG Archivist James Himphill; Curator Erika Radewagen; Museum Board Representative Reggie Meredith; and ASHPO Officer Elvis

Zodiacal. Appreciation was also extended to Island Business Center of Nu'uuli for their expedited printing and binding of two extra copy sets of the Harvard Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology volumes for local distribution. Dr. Ahlgren looks towards closer collaboration with American Samoa's Officials, Cultural Resource personnel and traditional Samoan Village Family Chiefs in the future.

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