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**COLUMBUS MUSEUM ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COORDINATOR
NAMED ART EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR**

COLUMBUS, GA- The Georgia Association for Art Educators (GAEA), a professional organization of art educators in Georgia affiliated with the National Art Education Association, has named Christy Barlow Museum Education Art Educator of the Year. Barlow is The Columbus Museum's Academic Programs Coordinator. She primarily develops resources for regional educators and manages programs aligned with the Museum's five-year strategic plan goal to establish the Museum as a leader and partner in education.

Since her arrival, the Museum has expanded partnerships with regional institutions including its primary education partner, the Muscogee County School District. Teacher resources ranging from lesson plans to Skype learning sessions have been reconfigured to meet the Georgia and Alabama curriculum standards. Her efforts have also increased the docent program participation by 60 percent, which has enabled the Museum to accept more requests to provide guided group tours.

"I chose museum education for a number of reasons, but mainly because of the huge impact that museum visits had on me throughout my life. I was lucky enough to grow up in a family that really valued museums and some of my most meaningful memories were of seeing things that made history come to life and also instilled a lifelong love of art. I take great pride in creating those kinds of experiences for others. I love seeing the moment when someone really connects with a museum object," said Barlow.

Barlow joined the Museum staff two years ago after serving as a graduate teaching assistant at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, where she completed PhD coursework, earning an Art Museum Education certificate. She also earned a Masters in Art Education and Bachelors of Fine Art with an emphasis in Art Education from the University of Southern Mississippi. She was nominated for GAEA Museum Education Art Educator of the Year by a GAEA member and will accept the award during a ceremony Saturday, October 15. Barlow will continue as a candidate for the National Association of Art Educators' Museum Education Art Educator of the Year award.

The Columbus Museum's mission is to bring art and history to life for the communities of the Chattahoochee Valley. For more information about The Columbus Museum, visit www.columbusmuseum.com.

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