

# Weinberg exhibit opens Oct. 27 at Children's Museum - Ribbon cutting at 2 p.m.

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of October 21, 2024)

Carolyn Krause brings us exciting news about the Alvin Weinberg exhibit at the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge!

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An exhibit that celebrates the life and achievements of Alvin Weinberg (1915-2006), director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory from 1955 to 1973, will be officially open to the public on Sunday, Oct. 27, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge, 461 W. Outer Dr.

A long-time resident of Oak Ridge, Weinberg was an internationally recognized scientist who authored nine books and made contributions to science, energy production and policy, scientific administration and our understanding of how human activity impacts climate.

A ribbon cutting for the exhibit, often affectionately referred to as the Weinberg Corner, will take place at 2 p.m. in the museum's Discovery Room. Among the people participating in the ribbon cutting will be Richard Weinberg, Alvin Weinberg's son, and Rhonda (Ronnie) Bogard, leader of the Alvin Weinberg Papers Archive Project.

The Weinberg Corner is a colorful display that features a life-size painting of Weinberg. It also includes on two walls information about his life and achievements and a kiosk that features videos of people who worked with him and newspaper articles on his contributions to science and technology, including radioisotopes for nuclear medicine, nuclear reactors and nuclear power plants.

"My job has been to preserve Alvin Weinberg's papers and share Oak Ridge's colorful history through his life and work," Bogard said of the project that has lasted seven years. "The goal of the exhibit is to preserve Alvin's legacy and introduce him to the public and the next generations."

Volunteers working with her have created the website, publicized the project, raised more than \$143,000 through corporate and private donations, and provided information about Weinberg that was used as part of the Weinberg Corner display.

"The Weinberg Corner is a way to introduce the Alvin Weinberg Papers Archive Project and will be followed by a much larger exhibit including STEM activities once grants are obtained," she added.

For more information on the Alvin Weinberg Papers Archive Project, which involved digitizing Weinberg's papers and making the collection open to the public, please visit the <https://childrensmuseumofOakRidge.org/weinberg/> website. It includes newspaper articles on Weinberg, a documentary on his life and videos featuring him and colleagues who knew him well and tell personal stories about him. Several called him "quiet, modest and brilliant."

The inspiration for Bogard's decision to make videos for the website came from her friend, Bonnie Carroll, who was the founder and chief data officer for Information International Associates, an Oak Ridge company she sold a few years ago. Carroll was the first to make a personal-story video for the website; in it she talked about how Weinberg's published document on managing the increasing amount of scientific information for the President's Science Advisory Committee under President John F. Kennedy helped shape her career.

In 1986 Weinberg asked his friend Selma Shapiro, founder and long-time executive director of the Children's Museum (first started by the Girl Scouts) and Bogard's mother, to preserve in an archive more than 200 boxes of papers. Weinberg published nine books and more than 540 journal papers; many of his reports and their drafts, speeches (including commencement addresses to college graduates) and correspondence with famous scientists and leaders of scientific institutions can be found in a collections database accessible from the website.

Starting in 2017, Bogard worked with a team of people to digitize and organize the papers so researchers, scholars and the public could access online Weinberg's ideas, scientific contributions, recommendations and decisions as a scientific administrator during his storied career.

Bogard listed some of the project's accomplishments at a recent team celebration.

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The opening of the archives database was announced in March 2021. On April 20, 2021, during the COVID pandemic, a "Tribute to Alvin Weinberg" organized by Bogard and her team was broadcast over Zoom to people across the nation. One of the speakers was Richard Weinberg, Alvin's son. A video recording of the tribute is available on the website. By the end of the year, all digital scans of the contents of most of the 200 boxes of Weinberg papers were completed.

In 2022 the third and final batch load of the digital files was uploaded to the Archivera collections database. After the digital archive was complete, planning began for the Weinberg Corner exhibit.

Michael Holz of Oak Ridge Associated Universities made a podcast in which Bogard described Weinberg's life and achievements and the Alvin Weinberg Papers Archive Project. Bogard also talked about the project during an Oak Ridge Rotary club meeting, STEM Night at Robertsville Middle School and a class she taught for the Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning.

In 2023 a contract for the design of Weinberg Corner was signed. Bogard described the archives project in an interview with Keith McDaniel and Ray Smith for their *Hidden History: Stories from the Secret City* video cast. [https://youtu.be/pc5jdK\\_IVcE?si=tdCFzN-fmmsmxk17](https://youtu.be/pc5jdK_IVcE?si=tdCFzN-fmmsmxk17)

Inventory of all the papers in boxes was completed, and Weinberg's slides were scanned and loaded as digital files to a computer disk drive for future use.

This year, the design of the kiosk was approved, and digital data, ranging from videos to newspaper articles, was loaded into the kiosk. A subset of the information from the digital archive is included along with a QR code to the archive itself. A soft opening of the Weinberg Corner, which included a taco dinner, was held for the project volunteers in late September, and the official opening was planned for Oct. 27.

Bogard credits the following volunteers who helped her with different aspects of the Weinberg Project, including the archive database, the "Tribute to Alvin Weinberg," the website complete with videos and the new exhibit: Beth Shea (director of the Children's Museum), Syd Ball, David Henderson, Michael Holtz, Harold and Sherry Ketterer, Carolyn Krause, Connor Matthews, Dennis Miller, James Rushton and Ray Smith.

Other important members of the team were the late Steve Stow and two project archivists, Kittie Crittenden and Courtney Ferrell.

Contributing to the success of the project, Bogard said, was the software, ArchivEra, used to build the easy-to-navigate database of more than 1,400 files containing Weinberg's documents. They included papers and letters written in 1940-1989 including when he was a research director and director of ORNL, as well as director of the Institute for Energy Analysis that he founded at Oak Ridge Associated Universities.

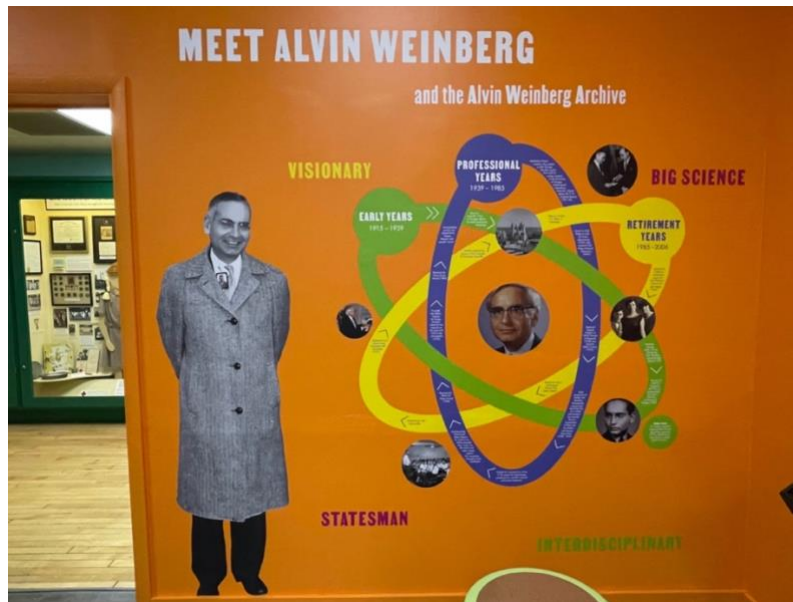
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Thank you, Carolyn. Be sure and mark your calendar for Sunday, October 27, 2024, from 1 to 4 p.m., to join us at the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge and enjoy the exhibit describing Alvin Weinberg's legacy through a colorful display and a kiosk featuring videos and newspaper articles on him, as well as other interesting aspects of Oak Ridge's most famous scientist.



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Alvin Weinberg was a visionary, a statesman, and he first coined the phrase, "Big Science!" (Photo courtesy of Caroyln Krause)



Enjoy the "touch screen" technology of the state-of-the-art kiosk (Photo courtesy of Caroyln Krause)