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Bob Marley Collection a Labor of “One Love”



Wilmington, DE: Collector Jack Low was six months old when Reggae Icon Bob Marley succumbed to cancer in May 1981.

The New Jersey resident started collecting items related to the Jamaican musician when he was 15 years old, inspired not only by the music, but the message too.

“Bob Marley believed in social justice,” said Low. “He believed in helping people that needed help. We need more people in the world like Bob Marley.”

Through the years, Low has amassed a variety of more than 3,000 items that include record masters with unreleased Marley songs, rare posters, handwritten notes and photos taken by Marley himself in his native Jamaica.

Low lent a large portion of the collection to organizers of the 25th Annual People’s Festival Tribute to Bob Marley for public display on July 20, 2019, the day of the People’s Festival. The music festival celebrates the Reggae superstar, who lived and worked in Wilmington in the 1960s and 70s.

Items are on exhibit at the Delaware Historical Society, 504 N. Market Street, the same block as the festival.

Low found the items through several avenues, including traveling to American cities that have a large Jamaican population such as New York, Miami and Wilmington. He has tracked down and purchased items from former band and crew members on Marley tours. Friends have also picked up items for him over the years. Low is still actively looking for Marley memorabilia. “I’m always looking,” he said. “There is always a story to find.”

He sees himself as more of a historian than collector and would like for his collection to eventually be acquired by the Marley family.

“It’s their legacy,” he said. “I’ve been purchasing pieces of history for them to tell the story of their family and culture. I’m a historian who would like to see these items shared with younger generations.”

The exhibit will be open from noon to 8 p.m. on July 20. The festival includes music on Market Street and inside The Queen at 7 p.m. with headliner Maxi Priest. The street festival includes a beer garden, international food court, vendors and a children's village sponsored by the Delaware Art Museum. Tickets at the gate cost \$30.

"I hope people enjoy the collection," said Low. "I hope you can feel the spirit in that collection, what type of person he was, and what goals he had."