

## Milestones Exhibit Showcases African-American Creators

Kicking off with an invitationonly celebration, Milestones: African Americans in Comics, Pop Culture and Beyond launched at Geppi's Entertainment Museum (GEM) on Friday night, December 13, 2013. The exhibit



opened to the public the next morning and is scheduled to run through August 10, 2014.

Milestones, which is curated by Milestone Media's Michael Davis and co-curated by Tatiana EL-Khouri, offers patrons a full spectrum of Black historic contributions made throughout comic book and graphic novel history. The exhibit grew out of initial discussions between GEM President Melissa (Missy) Bowersox and Davis three years earlier. They had lamented together the absence of a force like the late writer-editor Dwayne McDuffie, and together they seized on the idea of *Milestones*.

"When Missy asked me to curate something, the easiest way to go was to do Milestones retrospective because Milestone has always been inclusive. I wanted to showcase established African American artists, but also the guys who came before us, including Don McGregor. Don invented Sabre, which is one of the premier African American comics, invented by a white guy. African American culture, African American pop culture, African American culture in comics, has had a long influence. I wanted to do something which didn't just focus on Milestone, but focus on where Milestone came from and what came out of Milestone," Davis said.

"I hope to bring attention to just how many and how long African American creators and artists have been making such a huge contribution to pop culture in general, particularly in comics and movies and everything else," Bowersox said. "But I'm also hoping to find some new Dwayne McDuffies in the mix, not just as creators but also as mentors."

For more information about the exhibit, visit milestonestheshow.com or call Geppi's Entertainment Museum at (410) 625-7060. GEM is located at 301 W. Camden Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201 in the historic Camden Station building, immediately adjacent to Oriole Park and directly across the street from the Baltimore Convention Center.



Some of the opening night crowd for the Milestones exhibit.

#### STEVE GEPPI'S MEMBERS-ONLY TOUR AT GEM

Geppi's Entertainment Museum founder and Diamond Comic Distributors President and Chief Executive Officer Steve Geppi personally conducted the first ever "members only" private tour of the museum on Sunday, December 15, 2013, capping off a big weekend at the facility. Just two days earlier the Milestones exhibit started with an invitation-only opening, and Saturday evening saw GEM closing a bit early so it could host a private 60th birthday celebration with more than 100 people in attendance. Sums

5

### **COSPLAY SPOTLIGHT: DEAD IRONS**







After percolating for many years – it was huge in manga and anime circles long before the seed took root at traditional comic book shows – cosplay has become a huge component of many conventions in a relatively short period.

While fellow cosplayers and many convention attendees enjoy the cosplayers' efforts, perhaps no one enjoys it more than the people who created the characters in the first place.

Special effects artist Brody Williams turned cosplayers Bryan Treakle and Amber Love into Silas and Annie Belle Irons, respectively, from writer James Kuhoric's acclaimed Dynamite Entertainment mini-series Dead Irons at the Virginia Comicon last November.

Kuhoric, the veteran Army of Darkness, Battlestar Galactica and Legendary Talespinners writer, who will also be writing Dynamite's upcoming Six Million Dollar Man Season Six, was there to see his characters come to life for a photo shoot for a cover for the upcoming Dead Irons sequel in 2014.

"I can't think of a more rewarding situation as a creator than to see your characters made real. The cosplay community is one of the most dedicated groups of fans in all of comics. And to have life breathed into your characters by fans that are moved enough by your creations to make their own homemade costumes is truly humbling," Kuhoric said.

"Brody William's work was phenomenal," he said of the artist who turned cosplayers Bryan Treakle and Amber Love into Silas and Annie Belle Irons, respectively.

"We are talking about a young man that has more talent than many theatrical special effect houses. Over the course of the weeks leading up to the event, Brody talked with me often to get a deeper understanding of the characters in Dead Irons. He asked everything about the characters - their history, motivations, mannerisms, and physical description. As he developed his techniques to accomplish the makeups, he did test shots, gathered costuming, and fabricated props to be used during the photo shoot. When Brody presented the finished effects, I was staring at Silas and Annie Belle brought to life," he said. T



Heroes Convention, or HeroesCon, was founded in 1982 by Shelton Drum, owner of Charlotte's Heroes Aren't Hard To Find comics shop, and since its earliest days it has been regarded as one of the best comic-centric conventions in the country. Where many conventions are comic book shows in name only, that's not the case with this one.

HeroesCon 2014 will be held on June 20-22, 2014 at the Charlotte Convention Center, 501 S. College Street, Charlotte, NC 28202.

Art Adams, Cliff Chiang, Kevin Eastman, Esad Ribic, Don Rosa, Mark Schultz, Mark Waid, and Bernie Wrightson are just a handful of the comic book creators who are scheduled to be in attendance. Additional information is available on the show's site, www.heroesonline.com. S

6



# **Collecting By Character:**



#### By Scott Braden & J.C. Vaughn

The success of rebooting characters and bringing them into a new comic book universe didn't start in 2011 with DC Comics' "New 52." In fact, this successful phenomenon is only the latest attempt to take established heroes, polish them up, and use them again in a whole new way.

(26)