The exhibit will be available from April 14- October 8, 2018 in the Special Exhibits Gallery.

Wendell Minor’s America celebrates the artist’s four-decade career, highlighting his 25th anniversary as a preeminent illustrator of children’s books, each inspired by his love of history, art, science, and the natural world. Artworks gleaned from his expansive visual chronicles, and commentary reflecting on his collaborations with our nation’s most prominent authors, scientists, and historians, showcase a quarter-century of unforgettable picture book art. Original artworks, artifacts, and references for Reaching for the Moon and Look to the Stars by Buzz Aldrin, Sitting Bull Remembers by Ann Turner, Abraham Lincoln Comes Home by Robert Burleigh, and Arctic Son by Jean Craighead George, among others, will be on view. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue featuring essays by many of the authors and editors with whom Minor has partnered.

Works of Art in the Exhibit

• “The Thirty Mile River” and “Love Was His for the First Time”, two illustrations from the 1999 version of Jack London’s Call of the Wild. Gouache and watercolor on paper, collection of the artist.

• Cover illustration for The Mayflower and the Pilgrims' New World by Nathaniel Philbrick, 2009. Acrylic on masonite panel, collection of the artist.

• The entire set of illustrations from Minor’s Yankee Doodle America, an alphabet book inspired by the Revolutionary War, with illustrations made on reproduction wooden tavern signs.

• Original illustrations and sketches for two autobiographical books written by Buzz Aldrin: Reaching for the Moon and Look to the Stars.


• Original illustrations from biographies of important American women including Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart, Willa Cather, and Rachel Carson.

• Original cover illustration for Jean Craighead George’s classic Newbury honor-winning book, Julie of the Wolves. Cover illustrations for the other books in the series, Julie and Julie’s Wolf Pack are also on view.

Wendell Minor’s America was organized by
The Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts

Since his childhood in Aurora, Illinois, Wendell Minor (b. 1944) has had a romance with America. And as he explores more regions more closely, his love of the country grows with a vision that celebrates the beautiful, the lyrical. After completing his studies at the Ringling School of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida, Minor began creating original designs for Hallmark Cards, as well as book publishers in New York City. His cover illustrations have enhanced more than 2,000 works.

The artist draws upon his lifelong affinity for environmental issues to create illustrations for children's books, which he finds especially satisfying. They allow him to combine his love of the outdoors with his independent pursuits – including painting the landscape from life, in the tradition of classic American painters such as Homer, Hopper, and Wyeth. His wish is to inspire children to go out into the fields and woods and mountains to see wildlife in its natural habitat, and to give the children a positive perspective about the beauty that abounds in the world.

To research his children's books, Minor has traveled from the tropical Everglades to the Arctic Circle to the Midwest to the Grand Canyon. He loves bringing the scenes of nature to children and is particularly close to the children's books he has illustrated. Minor has said, “A picture invites the viewer into it and offers a sense of mystery. It lets the viewer become part of the process.”