

All I can say is I made a great choice

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By Tim McDonough

A few short years ago, Defiance College sophomore Zane Hayes thought community college in his hometown of Oberlin was his future. Now the history major at DC is an intern at the Andrew L. Tuttle Memorial Museum in downtown Defiance, and he's loving every minute of it.

"I was planning on going to community college, and one night a little before Christmas (in 2012), I got a call from (Defiance College football) coach (Brian) Sheehan," stated Hayes, the son of Brian and Jodie Hayes of Oberlin. "He just really swayed me toward Defiance. I love football, I played in high school at Firelands, and he wanted me to play here. All I can say is I made a great choice, I love Defiance College."

After deciding to enroll at DC, Hayes had no doubt that history would be his major.

"I fell in love with history my early high school years, I've always had an interest in the past," said Hayes, who has been an intern since January. "I feel like we almost have a need to study history because we can learn so much from it. In high school I had a very influential history teacher named Mr. (Jim)

Muth. He didn't just lecture, you had in-depth conversations with him about the past. Ever since then I felt a connection to history and that I needed to pursue it."

Richard Witteborg, the curator of exhibits at the museum, explained that city historian Randy Buchman told the staff in late fall that there was a possibility of getting an intern from Defiance College. After working with Dr. Donald Buerk, Associate Professor of History at DC, Hayes became that intern.

"After Randy told us about the opportunity to get an intern, we all thought it was a great idea and we asked him to pursue that," said Witteborg. "Randy talked to Dr. Buerk and that's when Zane's named emerged. Zane came here, he was interviewed, and that's when we found out he was interested in museum science."

"After Herman Dally (collections curator) and I talked with Zane, we thought we'd be able to share his services," continued Witteborg. "We felt that he could get some experience on the collections end and on the exhibit end. It's been working out very well, Herman has been able to show Zane what happens in his department, and I've been able to show him what happens from my end."

Hayes was very excited when Dr. Buerk approached him about the opportunity to intern.

"Last semester Dr. Buerk asked me if I'd be interested in being an intern at the museum and I told him yes right away," said Hayes. "I've always been interested in museums. Growing up I loved going to the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. When I was told I would have the opportunity to see the behind-the-scenes stuff, I was very excited."

Hayes was instrumental in helping to create the new exhibit "Defiance's Attic," one of three new exhibits now on display at the Tuttle Museum. The intern helped with the planning of the exhibit, selection of display artifacts, and arranging pictures and displays. Hayes also created, printed, and mounted all labels needed for the new exhibit.

"It was an amazing opportunity to be able to help set up that exhibit. A lot of people from the college have come to see it and I've gotten a lot of compliments on my work," Hayes said. "Defiance's Attic is really a mish-mash of Defiance history, it's a lot of different artifacts from different periods of time. It was a lot of fun going through the artifacts and learning about their history. It's really an interesting mix of pieces."

While Hayes knows his internship will be coming to an end soon, he would be open to doing it again next semester. As far as his future, Hayes is interested in museums, but he's also keeping all his options open with two years left before he graduates from college.

"I would love to be able to get into the museum business, but I need to explore all my options," Hayes said. "I've thought about law school a little bit, but I think I would love to work in the museum field."

"It's a total blessing to be here now," concluded Hayes. "I know that Defiance College offers a lot of opportunities to students, but I never thought I'd have an opportunity like this. If not for Defiance College, I'd be taking classes back home at community college and working."

