

# \*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

## Exhibit on Portuguese in Lowell in the 20th Century, at UMass Lowell, February 20–March 30, 2018



Backyards, with their grape vine arbors and favas, still define and give character to Portuguese neighborhoods, including Back Central. The Laurencio Family, photograph in James Higgins, *Lowell: A Contemporary View*, Mill Town Graphics, 1983.



Deolinda Mello was the Lowell Kiwanis Club's first female "Citizen of the Year." Later, she became the International Institute's executive director, a position she held from 1958 to 1980.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell Saab Center for Portuguese Studies announces the opening of a Community Exhibit on the Portuguese in Lowell, Massachusetts, titled "Immigration from the Atlantic Islands to Lowell, Massachusetts: Continuity and Change in the Mill City's Portuguese Community," on Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. at University Crossing, 2nd Floor, 220 Pawtucket Street. The event will begin with a keynote address in Moloney Hall, "Mills Calling: Portuguese Immigrants Make a Life and Make a Living in Lowell, Massachusetts," by Dr. Robert Farrant, Distinguished University Professor/Senior Research Fellow and lead curator of the exhibit (along with Dr. Gregory Fitzsimons). The evening will conclude with a ribbon cutting and reception. The exhibit, which will be on view at University Crossing until March 30, 2018, is sponsored in part by Enterprise Bank.

Following up on the 2015 exhibition, "The Lure of the Spindle: The Portuguese in Early 20th-Century Lowell," the new exhibition explores both waves of Portuguese immigration to the city: the first, from the 1890s to 1924, associated with the textile industry; and the second, from the late-1950s to the early 1980s, associated with the older manufacturing and newer high tech industries. The second wave, triggered by the Capelinhos volcanic eruption in the Azores that led to the Azorean Refugee Acts of

1958/1960, was increased considerably by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.

The exhibition examines how individuals and families made a living in the mills and later in the manufacturing and high-tech industries, in both instances attaining a measure of the "American Dream" that allowed for improved professional opportunities for their children. The second wave reinvigorated Portuguese language, culture, and identity in Lowell's Portuguese neighborhood of "Back Central," with Saint Anthony's Parish continuing to serve as the hub for the immigrants' spiritual needs and cultural and social activities. The Portuguese contributed to Lowell society in many ways, including by participating in civic activism that led to the Azorean Refugee Act, saved their tight-knit neighborhood from the Lowell Connector highway extension, and protested the closing of local factories.

The research and curating team—comprised of Prof. Robert Farrant and UMass Lowell students Molly Mahoney and Kady Phelps, the designer Kelly Freitas, Dr. Gregory Fitzsimons, and Prof. Frank Sousa, director of the Saab Center for Portuguese Studies—made use of documentation from the Center for Lowell History, the Lowell Historical Society, the International Institute of Lowell, the American Folklife Center, Saint Anthony's Parish, the John F. Kennedy Library, the Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives at UMass Dartmouth, and other public and private collections in order to develop the exhibition.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE SAAB CENTER FOR PORTUGUESE STUDIES BY CALLING (978) 940-5199  
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