

20Q: Catching up with The Angel Museum's Joyce Berg

By [Greg Little](#)

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Editor's Note: *Kicks presents 20Q, a feature that introduces readers to people involved in the area's arts and entertainment community. Compiled by Kicks Editor Greg Little, each piece will include a short bio, photo and answers to questions that provide insight into not only that person's artistic interests but also his or her unique personality.*

Joyce Berg

Joyce “The Angel Lady” Berg is owner of the world’s largest private collection of angels, which is housed at The Angel Museum, 656 Pleasant Ave., Beloit. The collection, which includes more than 14,000 angels and angel artifacts from around the world, is recognized as the world’s largest by the Guinness Book of World Records.

The museum also houses a collection of 600 black angels that was donated by TV icon Oprah Winfrey.

Berg, 85, also actively volunteers for several organizations in Beloit, and she continues to help out at the museum.

Berg and her husband, Lowell, started collecting angels in 1976—initially as souvenirs of trips they had made. The collection became a passion, and Berg believes the museum truly was “meant to be.” She hopes that when people visit the museum they feel joy in their hearts and leave with a smile on their faces.

Berg has two children, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

For more about The Angel Museum, including contact information, directions and business hours, visit TheAngelMuseum.org.

- 1. You claim to have the world’s largest angel collection. How many do you have, and are there other large angel collections?** The museum has 14,129 catalogued angels at present, and it was recognized by Guinness in 2004 with 13,165. There are no other (collections) that I’m aware of.
- 2. How did the idea for an angel museum come about?** We (she and her husband, Lowell) had our collection displayed in every room of our home. There were close to 10,000 of them, and we needed to share them with more people than we could take through our home in small groups.
- 3. What is The Angel Museum’s mission?** “To promote a unique personal experience that stimulates and enriches the human spirit for all ages.”
- 4. What is your favorite ice cream flavor?** Mint chocolate chip
- 5. In “It’s a Wonderful Life,” Zuzu Bailey remarks, “Teacher says every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings.” Do you believe that?** It is a “wonderful” idea. An interesting addition: At one of our national angel club conventions years ago, I met the woman that played the part of Zuzu (Karolyn Grimes).
- 6. Does everyone have a guardian angel?** I think so, because of the way things happen in our life.

- 7. What is the museum's connection to Oprah Winfrey?** Oprah donated her black angel collection sent to her by her fans when she was made aware of the museum.
- 8. What are visitors most often surprised by when they come to the museum?** People are in awe of the enormity and variety with no duplicates.
- 9. You have two hours of free time. What do you do?** I might just sit down and relax.
- 10. The Angel Museum is a nonprofit organization. How important are volunteers to your operation?** We could not function without our volunteers. We have only two part-time staff, and all others are volunteers.
- 11. What word do you always struggle to spell correctly?** Souvenirs
- 12. Name the one item you own that you could not live without?** I couldn't be without the orthotics in my shoes.
- 13. What are some common misconceptions about angels?** That all angels are female.
- 14. What person in history would you most like to meet?** Abraham Lincoln. I just feel he was a good man. I was born and raised in Illinois, and I can remember going to Springfield and seeing his home several times. I just feel he just was a kind, thoughtful person.
- 15. If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?** I would love to learn to knit and crochet.
- 16. Angels are featured in movie titles, song titles ... even as the name of a major league baseball team. Why do you think they are so popular?** Because they portray goodness.
- 17. Which of the five senses would you say is your strongest?** Touch, because I do enjoy giving hugs.
- 18. If you could witness any event past, present or future, what would it be?** I would love to see world peace in the future.
- 19. Are all angels the same, or do they appear to us in different forms?** Angels can appear in human forms.
- 20. Do you have a personal favorite angel from your collection?** I do not have a favorite. I don't want to hurt any of my angels' feelings.

Know someone involved in the local arts/entertainment community you think would be a great subject for 20Q? Email kicks Editor Greg Little at glittle@gazettextra.com.