

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VMFA Foundation (VMFAF) Appoints New Director of Government Relations**

Richmond, Virginia — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Foundation has named Katie Wallmeyer Payne as its new Director of Government Relations. Payne will work to increase awareness of VMFA's statewide contributions as she represents the museum before local, state and federal legislators and officials on issues that affect resources and support for the Museum's mission. She will join VMFAF on May 21.



Katie Payne, VMFAF Director of Government Relations (David Stover ©VMFA)

In her new role, Payne will strengthen VMFA's ability to deliver superior state-wide educational and visitor experiences as outlined in the Strategic Plan. She will work with other statewide partners including museums and educational institutions to advance educational, art and cultural priorities of the state.

Payne joins VMFA with nearly 10 years of experience in government relations working with Williams Mullen, LLP. Throughout her career, Payne has worked on a wide range of assignments assisting international corporations, Virginia-based businesses, trade associations and public entities — including VMFA — with government relations, legislative advocacy, business development and regulatory matters.

“Katie’s vast range of experience working with a variety of clients, her relationships with Virginia legislators, and her expertise in government relations and policy matters has positioned her to become a strong advocate for VMFA,” Director Alex Nyerges said. “We are thrilled that Katie has agreed to join the Foundation to leverage our unique position as a state institution to help us become a stronger museum leader in education and public engagement.”

Payne earned an undergraduate degree in public policy from the College of William & Mary and her law degree from the University of Richmond School of Law where she was editor-in-chief of *Richmond Journal of Law and the Public Interest*.

“I am thrilled to be joining the dynamic team at VMFA,” Payne said. “As a native of Richmond, I was fortunate to grow up with VMFA in my own backyard. In this new role, I look forward to increasing awareness among our local, state and federal representatives of the museum’s contributions across the Commonwealth.”

**About Katie Wallmeyer Payne**

Payne, a Richmond native, has been recognized as a “Rising Star” by *Virginia Super Lawyers* magazine (2013-present), was named among Virginia's "Legal Elite" by *Virginia Business* magazine (2015-2016) and was listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Government Relations (2018-present). She is a member of the Virginia Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division, the American Bar Association and the Richmond Bar Association. She previously served on Governor-elect Ralph Northam's Health and Human Resources Policy Council.

In addition to her government relations work at Williams Mullen, Payne was a member of the firm's Energy Practice Group where she advocated on behalf of large energy companies, technology companies and developers to advance public policy related to the solar industry. She and a colleague formed a trade association devoted to the advancement of solar energy in Virginia. Katie was also a member of Williams Mullen's Public-Private Partnership and Economic Development teams, and a member of the Virginia Housing Commission's Affordable Housing, Real Estate Law and Mortgages and Housing and Environmental Standards workgroups.

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**The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts** in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, and to encourage the study of the arts. Through the Office of Statewide Partnerships program, the museum offers curated exhibitions, arts-related audiovisual programs, symposia, lectures, conferences, and workshops by visual and performing artists. In addition to presenting a wide array of special exhibitions, the museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a global collection of art that spans more than 6,000 years. VMFA's permanent holdings encompass nearly 40,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris, and one of the nation's finest collections of American art. VMFA is also home to important collections of Chinese art, English silver, and French Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, British sporting, and modern and contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan, and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened its doors to the public after a transformative expansion, the largest in its history.

**The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit [www.vmfa.museum](http://www.vmfa.museum).**