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VMFA Announces Lynette L. Allston as Board of Trustees President

Allston is the First Native American Board President of a Top 10 U.S. Comprehensive Art Museum



Lynette L. Allston, VMFA's new Board of Trustees President. Photo by Sandra Sellars, © 2022 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Richmond, Virginia — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) is pleased to announce the election of Lynette L. Allston to the role of president of the museum's Board of Trustees. In the 86-year history of the institution, Allston is the first Native American person to hold this position and the first Native American board chair of a top 10 U.S. comprehensive art museum.

"We are tremendously delighted to have Lynette serving as our president of the Board of Trustees," said Alex Nyerges, VMFA's Director and CEO. "Through her many accolades in Virginia's diverse Native American community, Lynette will be not only a great leader, but will help ensure that the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is a museum that embraces all visitors."

Allston has served on the VMFA Board of Trustees since 2017 as a member of the Education Committee, Fiscal Oversight Committee, Nominating Subcommittee and Executive Committee. In 2021, she advised the External Affairs Committee to develop VMFA's land acknowledgement, which was installed in November of that year.

"I am excited and honored to be elected as the president of the Board of Trustees," said Allston. "The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts tells the story of people and their cultures through art, and it is my hope to continue to offer guidance about Virginia's and the country's rich cultural heritage."

Allston serves as the current Chief and Chair Emeritus of the Tribal Council of the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia, one of 11 tribes officially recognized by the Commonwealth. Under her leadership, the Nottoway Tribe of Virginia has been able to offer educational outreach and opportunities to close the gap in understanding the history and culture of the Nottoway Indians. Allston is co-author of *DoTraTung*, a book that offers a captivating story about the history, culture and lifestyle of the Nottoway Indians. She is also currently the president of the Board of Rawls Museum Arts in Courtland, Virginia, one the VMFA's 24 art museum partners across the state.

She spent her formative years on her family's farm in Drewryville, Virginia, and graduated from Duke University with a degree in history and certification in secondary education. After two decades of business ownership and civic engagement in Columbia, South Carolina, Allston retired to her family farm.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

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 50,000 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 has begun its more than \$190 million expansion and renovation project led by the international architecture firm SmithGroup. Tentatively scheduled for completion in 2027, the project consists of adding a new wing of nearly 170,000 square feet and renovating 45,000 square feet of existing spaces, while maintaining four acres of green space in the Sculpture Garden. Visitors will experience a seamless journey through the collections in the new wing, which will house contemporary art, African art, American art, a new suite of galleries for rotating special exhibitions and a special-events space. The expansion and renovation will enable the museum to display more art, welcome more visitors and provide more enjoyment.

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.

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Media Contacts

Jan Hatchette | 804.204.2721 | jan.hatchette@VMFA.museum

Amy Peck | 804.773.1791 | amy.peck@VMFA.museum

Kyla Coleman | 804.204.2702 | kyla.coleman@vmfa.museum

200 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd., Richmond, VA 23220