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Newark Museum of Art's Director and CEO, Linda C Harrison, To Depart in May 2025  
*Harrison successfully led the museum through challenges and transformation*

November 21, 2024 (Newark, New Jersey) -- The Newark Museum of Art (NMOA) announced today that Linda C Harrison, Director and CEO, will step down after leading the museum for six years. Departing in May 2025 for family reasons, Harrison will return home to the West Coast at the end of her tenure. The Museum's Board of Trustees has appointed a search committee and plan a national search to find Harrison's successor.

Harrison joined the museum in 2018 with a transformative vision for the 115-year-old institution. She will leave it poised to build on this vision with the groundbreaking of a large-scale community project -- Museum Parc -- a \$112 million physical transformation of the museum's campus. It is designed to be a beacon of Newark's arts and education district, optimizing the use of the museum's site with revitalized amenities, including public art, more welcoming access to the museum grounds, housing, and a signature new gallery space.

"Linda has been a transformative leader of this anchor cultural institution and in six years, has taken it to a new level," said Peter Englot, The Newark Museum of Art Board Chair. "She has leveraged the museum's illustrious history of national leadership in collecting from artists representing diverse global cultures, setting new standards for how museums everywhere can tell a more truthful story of who we are. She has developed a staff of museum professionals that is second to none in their knowledge, skills, and sensitivities for telling stories and allowing people of all backgrounds to see themselves in the exhibitions. As a result of her visionary and courageous leadership, the Newark Museum of Art today is nationally recognized as a thought leader. It is embraced locally as a beloved, inspirational catalyst of creativity."

Among Harrison's numerous accomplishments during her tenure at New Jersey's largest museum is establishing the Museum as a visitor-centric cultural anchor and advancing an equitable future for New Jersey and its communities. She is credited with adding the clarifying words 'of Art' to the Museum's name, leading NMOA through the Covid pandemic, establishing a downtown Arts and Culture District with Newark's Mayor, Ras J. Baraka, and developing the \$112M Master Campus Transformation Plan - Museum Parc - that included the restoration and reinterpretation of The Historic Ballantine House. The re-installation of the last surviving home of Newark's Gilded Age offers a radically new and inclusive interpretation of Newark's diverse communities, past and present. Under her leadership, the Museum reframed its 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> Century galleries with interventions and reinterpretations, respectful of history yet urgently revisionist, matured its systems and structures, launched an organization-wide diversity

framework, K-12 academic success and wellness initiatives, and maintained and deepened its reputation for excellence and relevancy in its Family and Adult Public Programs.

*"Linda Harrison has been nothing short of extraordinary in her leadership at The Newark Museum of Art. In a short time, she reinvigorated its mission, reimagined its role in the contemporary art, and remade it to better reflect the diversity of our city and our country,"* said **Dr. Salamishah Tillet, Director of Express Newark, Rutgers University-Newark**. *"Newark will forever be indebted to her bold vision and brave voice."*

Upon accepting the CEO position in 2018, Harrison relocated her family to downtown Newark and quickly became a student of Newark and a fixture in the community. Often seen at a local library or a town council meeting, Harrison's primary goal at NMOA was to create a museum accessible to all, especially to our Newark residents.

"Leading The Newark Museum of Art has been a distinct honor. The museum is an intergenerational institution that serves our global community, and I have felt that profoundly from my first day here," said Harrison. "The role of museums continues to evolve in ever more relevant ways: from repositories of history to places where we gather to rediscover the past, understand the present, and imagine the future. It has been my distinct and ongoing joy to help tell a broader, more prosperous, and more inclusive story of our diverse America and ensure The Newark Museum of Art is a museum for all. Having just completed our next three-year strategic plan, 2025 will be the right time for a leadership transition. The museum is on a path to a strong future."

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#### **About The Newark Museum of Art**

*We welcome everyone with inclusive experiences that spark curiosity and foster community.*

Founded in 1909 and located on a four-acre campus in the heart of Newark, New Jersey, the Newark Museum of Art was founded on the radical belief among museums in 1909 that art is for everyone. NMOA built its collections with art from Asia, Africa, and the Americas, areas that other museums ignored at the time. 115 years later, NMOA is the state's largest fine art museum and has the 12th most extensive collection in the nation. It preserves and shares 300,000+ objects of artistic, scientific, and cultural importance. Visitor- and community-centered, NMOA responds to its diverse public's evolving needs and interests by offering exhibitions, programming, a research library, paid internships, and local and global partnerships.

#### **About Linda C. Harrison**

Harrison has nearly 25 years of business and cultural experience as a corporate leader, strategist, and museum director. She previously served as director and CEO of the Museum of the African Diaspora. She is recognized for innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to fostering inclusive and socially responsible cultural spaces. She has a proven track record of driving transformative change, promoting contemporary art engagement, and enhancing cultural relevance. Harrison serves in a variety of professional responsibilities in other organizations, including Treasurer of the Board of Directors, Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) and Treasurer of the Board of Directors, American Alliance of Museums (AAM).