



For immediate release

Marita Rivero Tapped to Lead Museum of African American History

FORMER WGBH VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER FOR RADIO AND TELEVISION
TAKES THE HELM OF CULTURAL INSTITUTION AND ICONIC NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

DECEMBER 14, 2015 - BOSTON, MA — The Museum of African American History, Boston and Nantucket, announced today that its Board of Directors has named Marita Rivero as the organization’s Executive Director.

Rivero succeeds Beverly Morgan-Welch, who served as the Museum’s Executive Director with great distinction for 16 years. In November, Morgan-Welch left to become Associate Director of External Affairs at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC.

The Museum of African American History (MAAH) is dedicated to preserving, conserving and interpreting the contributions of African Americans and those who found common cause with them. The Museum presents the powerful history of New England’s 18th and 19th century black abolitionist and entrepreneurial communities through its stewardship of some of the nation’s preeminent historic landmarks — including the African Meeting House (1806) and the Abiel Smith School (1835) on Boston’s Beacon Hill; and the African Meeting House (c.1820) and the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House (c.1774) on Nantucket — and Black Heritage Trails® in Boston and Nantucket. It also holds extensive collections and sponsors a robust offering of exhibitions, scholarly lectures, concerts, and innovative educational programs.

A long-time member of the MAAH board of directors and current Chair of the board of trustees of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Rivero has deep knowledge and experience in national museums. She has served as the Museum’s Interim Executive Director since Morgan-Welch’s departure.

“We are thrilled that Marita has agreed to lead this important institution on a permanent basis,” said Cathleen Douglas Stone, Chair of the Museum Board of Directors. “She brings to the role stellar business acumen, media savvy, and the passion and imagination that will help us build on the success of nearly 50 years and propel us to have an even greater impact in the years ahead.”

“The Museum has played such an important role in opening our understanding of the present-day American story. I am excited by the prospect of furthering work linking preservation and education with civic opportunities in our democracy,” Rivero said.

Rivero has had a distinguished career in public broadcasting, which began in 1970 at WGBH, where she produced public affairs television programming, including *Say Brother* (now *Basic Black*). Her projects have since

received numerous major production awards, including the Peabody and Emmy Awards for WGBH/PBS' *Africans in America*, a History of Slavery.

As General Manager for Radio and Television, Rivero oversaw all of WGBH's radio and television activities, including programming, digital, marketing, and administration. Earlier in her career, she served as Vice President and GM of WPFW-FM Pacifica in Washington DC, successfully growing a fledgling operation into a production award-winning jazz and public affairs station, with numerous accolades for its community-based programs and services. She returned to Boston in 1988 to head WGBH Radio.

Under her leadership, WGBH expanded media services, re-imagining and developing the multi-cast non-fiction channel WORLD, creating a new online lecture service, growing radio operations from one to five stations including a Cape & Islands service, and signing on a new all-news Boston station. She began a two-year appointment as Senior Advisor to WGBH in 2013.

Rivero has been honored with several awards, among them, a Pinnacle Award from the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the first Image Award for Vision and Excellence from Women in Film and Video/New England, YWCA Women Achievers, and an Abigail Adams Award, Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus.

She sits on the Bunker Hill Community College Board of Trustees, and most recently ended her terms on the National Public Radio (NPR) Board of Directors and chairmanship of the National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC). A graduate of Tufts University, she has participated in postgraduate and executive management programs at Harvard Graduate School of Education, and the Stanford and Wharton Schools of Business. Her filmmaker son, Raafi Rivero, is co-founder of Brooklyn's The Color Machine.

In her new role, Rivero now oversees some of the nation's most important National Historic Landmarks. On Boston's Beacon Hill, the first African Meeting House in the nation has been pristinely restored. It is the oldest extant black church building in America, and the adjacent Abiel Smith School is the oldest building erected solely for the purpose of educating black children. Today, the school's galleries feature rotating exhibits and a Museum Store open year round. On the Island of Nantucket, the Florence Higginbotham House, believed to be the oldest home built by a black family for their own occupancy, sits next door to the beautiful African Meeting House, the island's most vivid reminder of a thriving 19th-century African American community.

The Museum's historic sites, talks, tours, videos, collections, and education programs showcase the amazing stories of pioneering activists, entrepreneurs, journalists, educators, artists, and authors who organized campaigns that advanced the cause of freedom and changed the nation.

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