



**LEADERSHIP CHANGE ANNOUNCED AT MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY;
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACCEPTS NEW SMITHSONIAN POST**

Sept. 17, 2015 -- BOSTON, MASS. – The Museum of African American History in Boston and Nantucket announced that its long-time Executive Director, **Beverly Morgan-Welch**, is leaving the organization to assume a senior-level position at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC.

As part of the leadership transition, former board chair **Marita Rivero** will become Interim Executive Director of the Boston-based museum beginning on October 19, 2015. A veteran leader of media and cultural organizations, Rivero stepped down in 2013 as Vice President and General Manager for Radio and Television at the public broadcasting station WGBH and continued of counsel until July of this year. She currently serves as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Museum of African American History 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, conversations, concerts, and innovative educational programs.

In November, Morgan-Welch will become Associate Director for External Affairs for the Smithsonian’s newest museum, set to open its doors in 2016. She will have responsibility for directing all aspects of the global strategic vision for development, public affairs, and education programming.

“For more than a decade and a half, we have all benefitted from Beverly’s visionary and remarkably effective leadership,” said **Cathleen Douglas Stone**, Chair of the Museum’s Board of Directors. “Like the historic sites she has so lovingly restored and brought to life, she is a national

treasure and we are sad to lose her. At the same time, it is reassuring to know that in her new role she will continue to be a singularly eloquent and passionate advocate in Washington and nationally for this museum and the special American history it is entrusted to share.”

“As the Museum of African American History prepares to mark its first 50 years in 2017, we have many significant accomplishments to celebrate. And nobody has played a more integral role in the development of this institution than Beverly Morgan-Welch,” said incoming Interim Executive Director Rivero. “She will leave behind a vibrant, vital institution with expansive, high-quality programming. I look forward to working with the dedicated professional staff, committed volunteer board, and a large and growing base of members and supporters to sustain that tradition of outstanding service to local communities, the Commonwealth, and the nation.”

Museum board member and Emerson College President **M. Lee Pelton** will chair a committee that will undertake a national search for Morgan-Welch’s replacement.

On December 6, the Boston community will have an opportunity to acknowledge Morgan-Welch’s contributions when she is honored with a Living Legends Award at the Museum’s gala celebration. Former Massachusetts Governor and First Lady **Deval and Diane Patrick** and Eastern Bank President and Chief Operating Officer **Bob Rivers** and his wife **Patricia** are co-chairing the event, which annually recognizes extraordinary trailblazers whose accomplishments uphold the 18th and 19th century legacy of and commitment to freedom and justice that helped build our American democracy.

“I cherish every moment of my adventure in Boston and Nantucket,” Morgan-Welch said. “It has been an honor and pleasure to steward these exquisite historic places and to interpret the quintessential American history they represent. They were conceived and built at a time when almost every human being of African descent in America was enslaved and deprived of any education. What a privilege to lift up their lives and accomplishments for us to honor and emulate. I have abundant gratitude for the spectacular staff, board, descendants, donors, members, scholars, elected officials, and partners who have supported me on this miraculous ride.”

Morgan-Welch has led the museum since 1999, presiding over an extraordinary period of growth and renewal, raising more than \$15 million to restore and preserve the Museum’s seven structures, including three National Historic Landmarks. She oversaw the award-winning historic restoration of the African Meeting House in Boston, as well as the purchase and preservation of a pre-Revolutionary War home on Nantucket built by a formerly enslaved weaver named Seneca Boston and his Wampanoag wife, Thankful Micah, and occupied by multiple generations of their descendants.

During Morgan-Welch's tenure, she also attracted precious donations to the Museum's collection, and conceived and curated exhibitions, programming, and special events that explain and illuminate for new audiences the largely hidden history of African Americans beginning in the 17th century. Signature programs developed under Morgan-Welch's leadership include annual summer institutes for teachers, the Dig and Discover Archeology and Underground Railroad Adventures for children, the *Profiles in Color* lecture series, and the *Living Legends Award* Gala. She also has been a serial collaborator, establishing innovative partnerships and fruitful relationships with, among others, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, various colleges, universities, and businesses, as well as numerous of the region's community, professional, and cultural organizations.

Lonnie Bunch, Founding Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, said: "I am so pleased and honored to have Beverly Morgan-Welch join the museum at this critical moment as the Associate Director for External Affairs. Beverly's extraordinary leadership skills, creativity, vision, and grace will be a great asset to the museum as it moves towards its opening in the fall of 2016. We know that the museum will be made better by Beverly's presence."

A gifted speaker, writer, and storyteller, Morgan-Welch is widely respected as both an interpreter of American history and an insightful observer of contemporary societal issues. Countless elected officials, as well as leaders of cultural, corporate, philanthropic, religious, and academic institutions, have relied on her savvy judgment, organizational prowess, and generous spirit.

Morgan-Welch is an elected member of the American Antiquarian Society, the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Historical Society. A graduate of Smith College, her awards include the Smith Medal (2009), an Honorary Doctorate for Public Service from Suffolk University (2014), the President's Distinguished Service Award from Bunker Hill Community College (2014), and the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Commonwealth Award in Achievement (2015).

Prior to joining the Museum in 1999, Morgan-Welch served in corporate philanthropy at Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company and Raytheon. As a development professional at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, she acquired an African American collection establishing the Amistad Center for Art and Culture housed at the art museum. She later served as the Executive Director of the Greater Hartford Arts Council.

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