



**On the ballot for two-year terms:
Acceptance/Rejection of the Officer Slate:
Councilor-at-Large Positions 5, 6, 7, 8**

Officer Slate

Margaret Koch, Director, The Bullock Texas State History Museum, Austin | **President**

Michelle Everidge, Chief of Strategic Initiatives, Witte Museum, San Antonio | **Vice President for Programs**

Carl Hamm, Managing Partner, Alexander Haas, Dallas | **Vice President for Development**

Jake Mangum, Project Development Librarian, University of North Texas, Denton | **Vice President Special Projects**

Rebecca Bridges, Programming and Interpretation, The Grace Museum, Abilene | **Secretary**

Charlie Walter, Director, Mayborn Museum Complex, Baylor University, Waco | **Treasurer**

Chris Dyer, President & CEO, Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute, Waco | **Past President**

Candidates for Councilor-at-Large:

Ami Kamara, Museum Manager, Fire Museum of Texas, Beaumont (incumbent)

Daniel Carey-Whalen, Director, El Paso Centennial Museum and Chihuahuan Desert Gardens

Rorie Cartier, Museum Director, National Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg

Cynthia Evans, Site Manager, French Legation State Historic Site, Austin

Ann Fortescue, President & Executive Director, International Museum of Art & Science, McAllen

Emily Wilkinson, Director of Public Art and Collection, Texas Tech University at Lubbock

Q1: *Who do you represent?* This response may include information about demographic data, geographic data, race/ethnicity, self-identification, area of interest in professional or personal life, education, expertise, or the “why vote for me” topic.

Q2: Given the current uncertainties in the state and nation, what do you see as museums (in general) greatest challenge, and what are your ideas for moving the museum profession forward? This response may include a “what is most important about museums” topic or highlighting your current or previous willingness to serve.



Ami Kamara, Museum Manager, Fire Museum of Texas, Beaumont (incumbent)

Q1: I have been a museum professional in Southeast Texas for 11 years and am currently serving as President of the Southeast Texas Museum Association. I believe I best represent the unique needs of small museums and museums with small staff. I believe I can bring a unique perspective to TAM Council through my background and experiences in the museum field. While I work for a small specialized history museum, my personal focus is on Civil Rights Movement photography.

Q2: I believe museums have a big challenge ahead of them in the next few years. The COVID pandemic hastened what was originally a slow change in accessibility, infrastructure, programming. TAM is actively working to meet the increased and rapidly changing needs of museums across the state and I have a willingness to serve in any capacity

requested of me.



Daniel Carey-Whalen, Director, El Paso Centennial Museum and Chihuahuan Desert Gardens

Q1: Since Identity is socially constructed, I present as “white,” straight, and male, however I identify as Irish-American, an LGBTQ+ ally, and a Feminist. Yet, who I represent in the museum community has as much to do with geography as it does Identity. As the Director of the oldest museum in El Paso and a former Co-Chair of the Border Museum Association, I believe that I represent the people and cultural institutions of West Texas; that vast, mountainous region west of the Pecos River, far from the major metropolises of the east. Furthermore, being in a “majority minority” community (El Paso is 85% Hispanic) I feel that it is my duty to elevate the many voices of the Latinx communities. I have lived on the Border for over 8 years and now consider myself a Fronterizo (a Border citizen). Lastly, I have spent most of my career in Education/Community

Engagement with experience in K-12 tours, adult programming, teaching Museum Studies, and professional development.

Q2: Relevance has been and will continue to be the greatest challenge for museums. I see the current pandemic and time of political and social division as wake-up calls for the museum community. How do museums remain relevant? First, our staffs and boards need to mirror our community’s demographics. On a national level, we have been talking about diversifying our workforce for over a decade, it is past time to make those changes. Through UTEP’s Museum Studies program, I have helped train our future colleagues. Many of my former students have positions in the museum field, but now they need opportunities for leadership positions. The second way for museums to remain relevant is through community engagement. We need to continue inviting communities to share and shape our museums by strengthening partnerships and enabling community curators. The future of our museums lies within the communities we serve.



Rorie Cartier, Museum Director, National Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg

Q1: Located in the heart of the Texas Hill Country, the National Museum of the Pacific War (NMPW) educates and inspires present and future generations about WW-II in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater and the relevance of its lessons. Far beyond the museum’s physical boundaries, stories and artifacts combine to engage visitors in dialogue about the enduring values (leadership, loyalty,

patriotism, and commitment), exemplified by those affected by World War II in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater and how those lessons can help us address our current challenges. NMPW welcomes visitors from every state in the Union and over 30 countries, spanning numerous demographics. Traditionally we welcome more than 160,000 visitors, including 15,000 field trip students from across the country. In recent years, we have developed myriad digital programs that enable us to reach students of all ages, whether in Texas or elsewhere, in metro areas or rural communities, and as far away as Ghana and Japan. As the Museum Director, I directly represent incredibly talented staff and volunteers, along with thousands of supporters and the families of those WWII veterans that served in the Asiatic Pacific. My museum career has involved just about every aspect of the industry, from ticket sales to curatorial, from development to education.

Q2: I currently serve on several boards spanning education, tourism, and museums. It is clear that other than simply “keeping the doors open,” diversity and inclusion are major issues in all industries. For our constituents, museums are highly credible sources of information, even more so during the pandemic, and with that credibility comes a responsibility to engage with the deeper concerns of the population. Moving forward we need to encourage and reach-out into the community and create a safe space for democratic and civil dialogue. According to a recent study, many people believe that some cultural organizations are “not for people like me,” because of their race, ethnicity, age, physical ability, or disability. The most-shared attribute of a person in the US who has visited any kind of cultural organization in the last two years is that they self-identify as Caucasian. By consciously broadening our audience, not only will we be able to educate and inspire more of the population, but we can cultivate future supporters and museum industry professionals to carry museums into the future.



Cynthia Evans, Site Manager, French Legation State Historic Site, Austin

Q1: I'm Cynthia Evans; I am the Site Manager for the French Legation State Historic Site in Austin, TX. I am African American. I graduated from the Museum Science program at Texas Tech University. I have lived in Texas for 18 years. My professional experience includes 15 years of combined experience in the museum and archival field.

I believe I am a good candidate because I have direct experience in a variety of areas in the field. My experience covers curation, exhibitions, registration, collection management & archival management.

Additionally, I have worked for museums, historic house museums, cultural centers, archives, and research centers.

Q2: I think there are a variety of challenges. One I feel is salaries in the museum profession. We tend to make less than our sister professions (library and archives), but I believe we are required to know as much if not more than these fields about caring for collections.

I believe moving the museum profession forward involves recognizing and providing programming that considers what the community wants to experience—two, using the museum space as a welcoming platform for local and globally relevant topics. And three, creating organizations that seriously recognize, implement, and engage in cultural equity programming.



Ann Fortescue, President & Executive Director, International Museum of Art & Science, McAllen

Q1: The theme of my work in museums is “connecting with audiences and making the museum accessible.” Early on as a museum educator in historic houses, small and large history museums, I honed my listening skills by working with community advisory groups eager to share their opinions and expectations for a museum visit. As an

executive director of a small art museum in Ohio and now at the International Museum of Art & Science in McAllen, our challenges are building a strong base of diverse financial support by reigniting community passion for the museum through donor relationships, engaging key community stakeholders, and building audience participation by removing financial barriers to museum experiences. My cumulative experiences connecting communities to their museums requires me to understand local values while continuously applying what I learn from my peers in the field.

Q2: Greater diversity among museum professionals and more equitable pay. The museum field needs the diversity of perspectives for museums to remain relevant and connected to their communities. Facing wide-spread social challenges like racism, unequal access to health care, and deeper divisions between quality public education, it becomes increasingly important that museum staff represent the diversity of those in our community and nation. As a museum director, I can make a difference through paid internships, fundraising for merit and cost of living pay increases, and finding professional development opportunities for emerging museum leaders.



Emily Wilkinson, Director of Public Art and Collection, Texas Tech University at Lubbock

Q1: I currently work as the Director for Public Art for the Texas Tech University System in Lubbock, TX and began this position in February 2014. Prior to accepting my current position, I worked for several years as the Education Director for the National Ranching Heritage Center. I miss the traditional aspects of working in a museum facility, although I have come to love public art and what it can do for the community. I would love to see more of a connection between museum professionals and public art administrators. My hope would be to help connect the two worlds as the group of Texas Public Art Administrators is currently very informal and is not tied to any specific state organization.

Most of my work experience has been within a university-based setting, an area that I do not see represented very often. The dynamic between an institution of higher education and their fine arts components, such as museums and public art, is one that I find fascinating and have not found much research

as to why most universities invest so much in art. Because of this, not only do I work full time, I am also a part-time doctoral student researching this aspect of the field. My PhD research will focus on how learning through the informal arts benefits a higher education campus.

Living in Lubbock means that I am a bit isolated from many other fine art communities, both in the museum world, but especially in public art. Although our population is up to around 250,000, we are hundreds of miles from larger communities. Because of this, I feel that a strong network with museum and arts professional is important to maintain and give back to. I would love the opportunity to serve TAM as it has always been an organization that has been so helpful to me.

Q2: 2020 has been such a tough year for everyone and I think the present circumstances have shown us more why we need institutions such as museums and activities like viewing public art to provide beauty and civilization in a world that seems to be lacking that right now. The arts field has also shown a way to provide a voice to some that may not be able to speak out otherwise. One of the bright spots for me is to see how people can visit and interact with public art despite the pandemic. It seemed to draw more visitors for us because it was an enjoyable and safe outdoor activity to do with family and friends while still being socially distant.

I think the biggest challenge for museums is to take what we have learned from this experience and translate that into improvements for the field. That would vary from institution to institution, but I believe we have all had time to reflect on things that we could be doing that we haven't been, or how to engage our audience on a digital or virtual, better social media engagement, and even how to do more with less staff.