

PRESS RELEASE

Press Contact

Rachel Eggers

Associate Director of Public Relations
rachele@seattleartmuseum.org
206.654.3151

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

DR. CONSTANCE W. RICE ELECTED BOARD CHAIR OF SEATTLE ART MUSEUM



SEATTLE - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) announced today that Dr. Constance W. Rice has been elected Chair of the museum's board of trustees, effective September 21, 2021. A celebrated leader and activist, Dr. Rice has served on the museum's board since 1995. She succeeds Stewart Landefeld, who has served as Chair since 2015.

The Board Chair oversees the museum's leadership and budget and represents the museum as an ambassador of its mission to connect art to life. Before her election to Chair, Dr. Rice has served on the board's Executive, Governance, and Education & Community Engagement Committees, serving as co-chair of the latter since 2010. She also served on the Equity Task Force, an ad-hoc staff and board committee that met from August 2020-January 2021 to develop recommendations for the institution going forward.

"It's an honor to step into this leadership position on the museum's board, after so many meaningful years of serving and making connections," says Dr. Rice. "The experiences we have all shared over the last challenging 18 months have only made clearer to me how vital the arts are in our communities and how our

relationships to each other are paramount. I like to learn before I lead, and I look forward to learning from SAM board, staff, and community about the opportunities to continue to build a museum that truly belongs to all.”

“Constance brings her vast leadership experience, deep community and civic connections, and warm and gracious personality to SAM as our Board Chair at a very important time,” says Carla Lewis, SAM Board President. “We are extremely fortunate to have her with us, and I am very excited to work closely with Constance and with SAM Director and CEO Amada Cruz to continue to move the museum forward as a community asset for our region and a key part of the recovery of our beloved downtown Seattle.”

CONSTANCE RICE - BIOGRAPHY

Constance W. Rice was born in Brooklyn, New York. She moved to Seattle to attend the University of Washington, where received her M.A. degree in public administration in 1970 and a Ph.D. in higher education administration in 1974.

Dr. Rice is the President of the Very Strategic Group, a consulting firm for executive coaching and educational policies. She is currently working on educational projects in the Mississippi Delta and Seattle. In 2018, she was appointed to the Families, Education, Pre-School and Promise Levy Oversight Committee for the City of Seattle. She is a Regent at the University of Washington, appointed by Governor Inslee, and past chair of the board. She is also a City of Seattle Commissioner for the Early Learning and Education Levy funds, which include the Seattle Promise project.

Dr. Rice was formerly the Senior Executive Fellow for Casey Family Programs, the nation’s largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster care in America and building communities of hope for children and families. Dr. Rice was also the foundation’s Managing Director for Knowledge Management, providing subject matter content for strategic consultants working in 50 states and jurisdictions.

A tireless activist and civic volunteer, Dr. Rice has made her mark in many areas of national and international service. As founder and past president of Strategic Education Centers, Dr. Rice and her advisory board established two educational centers in Swaziland. Dr. Rice also served as the national founding Executive Director of the Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation, U.S.A. Dedicated to establishing the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre in Cape Town, South Africa. The foundation is now located in New York City.

Dr. Rice is also known for her establishment of the Health and Nutrition Programs for seven elementary schools, which provided evening dinners for the students and their families and educational workshops. In addition, Dr. Rice has partnered with the Meredith Mathews YMCA to launch the 2011/2012 global scholar program in conjunction with the Black Achievers Project. Dr. Rice has also lectured extensively on the importance of diversity in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, and Kobe.

Dr. Rice is the former Vice Chancellor and Senior Chancellor of Seattle Community Colleges. She also served as interim president of North Seattle Community College and is a former affiliate faculty member of the University of Washington’s Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering. Dr. Rice was the chair of Women and Ethnic Studies at Shoreline Community College, and is a member of the Washington State Kaiser Permanente board.

In addition to SAM, Dr. Rice has held a leadership position on the board of the Seattle Community College District. She served as a gubernatorial appointee to the Washington Student Achievement Council and was its Vice Chair. Dr. Rice served on the University of Washington Visiting Committee for the Evans School. She is the past national western area Vice Director of The Links, Incorporated, and served on the Board of Directors Downtown Rotary, the Rainier Club, The Seattle Foundation, Swedish Hospital, and Bank of America Washington State. She also serves on an advisory committee for the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM).

Numerous civic and humanitarian organizations have honored Dr. Rice for her industrious, unflagging community service. Dr. Rice is married to Norman B. Rice, former Mayor of the City of Seattle.

Photo credit: Courtesy the University of Washington.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020, following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a "museum without walls," free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.