Berkshire Museum Announces Leadership Changes

VAN SHIELDS TO RETIRE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DR. DAVID ELLIS JOINS AS INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Nina Garlington Named to New Position

PITTSFIELD, MA—Executive Director Van Shields is retiring from the Berkshire Museum. Dr. David Ellis will become interim Executive Director, as the museum undertakes a national search for Shield’s successor.

“We are grateful for Van’s leadership and vision, especially through a challenging time,” said Elizabeth McGraw, President of the Museum’s Board of Trustees. “Van helped chart a course to secure the museum’s future, true to our mission and responsible to our community. We wish our friend well in his retirement.”

Shields joined the museum in September 2011 aiming to increase its relevance to the community and ensure the museum became financially sustainable. Among other accomplishments during his tenure, the museum increased its programming based on interdisciplinary interpretation, launched the WeeMuse early childhood education program, and expanded its educational services to area schools, more than doubling the number of student experiences delivered each year since he arrived. Shields played a key role in fundraising for improvements to the Museum including securing the largest government grant and largest foundation gift in the museum’s history. Working with his colleagues and the Museum’s Board of Trustees, he played a key leadership role in developing the museum’s master plan announced in July of 2017.

“I have been honored and privileged to lead this extraordinary museum and its talented staff. Working with a board of dedicated and smart volunteers, along with community partners who
share our belief in the museum’s power to transform lives, we have charted a course that will well serve the museum and this community,” Shields said.

**Dr. David Ellis** brings more than 30 years of experience to the Berkshire Museum, specifically in planning, organizational development, board relations/governance, fundraising and administration/operations. He served as President of the Museum of Science from 1990 to 2002. He has served as Interim President of the Boston Children’s Museum, and Interim Executive Director of the Harvard Museum of Natural History. He served as a member of the Board of Directors of American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the Board of Advisors for the MIT Museum.

“I look forward to working with the Board of Trustees, the museum leadership, and the staff to make the transition that secures the course to a strong and sustainable future,” said Ellis.

Nina Garlington will move to a new position supporting Ellis as Chief of Staff, responsible for coordinating museum planning and programming across departments. A new Chief Engagement Officer will be named. No other staff changes are planned.

# # #