

Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Lisa A. Batitto, Public Relations Manager, Newark Museum
Phone: 973-596-6638, e-mail: lbattito@newarkmuseum.org

49 washington street
newark, nj 07102-3176

newarkmuseum.org
WEB

Newark Museum
FACEBOOK

Lonnie G. Bunch III to Be Honored at Newark Museum Legacy Gala Saturday, May 13, 2017

NEWARK: Lonnie G. Bunch III, founding director of the newly opened Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), will receive the John Cotton Dana Medal for Visionary Leadership in Museums at the Newark Museum's *Legacy Gala* on Saturday, May 13, 2017.

Originally from the Newark area, Bunch has spent nearly 30 years as a public historian, scholar and educator, and the last 10 years overseeing the Smithsonian's newest museum, which stands on a five-acre site on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., adjacent to the Washington Monument.

Bunch is the second person to receive the medal named after the Newark Museum's visionary founder and the foremost pioneer of modern museums. The first recipient of the John Cotton Dana Medal for Visionary Leadership in Museums was Alice L. Walton, Founder and Chair of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in 2015. The award carries significant meaning for both the Newark Museum and Mr. Bunch. The Newark Museum was the first museum Bunch ever visited as a child and years later in 1994, Bunch played a crucial role in the reinterpretation of the Ballantine House, the 1885 National Historic Landmark, which showcases the Newark Museum's Decorative Arts collection.

"As the founder of the Newark Museum, John Cotton Dana believed museums and their collections should be accessible to all people, not only a few. Like Dana did a century ago, the NMAAHC under Mr. Bunch's direction furthers this commitment, providing voice and relevance for all through collections that have the power to educate, inspire and transform our communities, nation and world," said Newark Museum Director and CEO Steven Kern, who will present the award to Bunch along with Gala co-chairs and board members Sarah Bonesteel, Chief Investment Officer, Retirement Business, Prudential; and Bob Doherty, New Jersey State President, Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

"I am humbled to receive this award in my home state, said Bunch. "Growing up in Belleville, New Jersey shaped who I am, and I am honored to carry on John Cotton Dana's passion to educate Americans through institutions that are accessible to all."

The Newark Museum is one of the most influential museums in the country, with the *Legacy Gala* as its major fundraising event. The Museum's collections rank as the 12th largest in the nation, with nearly 300,000 objects representing American art, Decorative arts, the arts of Asia, Africa, Native America, ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, and the natural sciences. The Gala also recognizes the Museum's role as a national leader in museum education. The event provides essential support for the Museum's education initiatives that serve more than 90,000 school children and thousands of families each year.

Mr. Bunch is regarded as one of the nation's leading figures in the historical and museum community. Prior to the NMAAHC's completion and opening in September, Bunch presented seven exhibitions in galleries located in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, including "Through the African American Lens: Selections from the Permanent Collection." In addition, the museum's traveling exhibition, "Changing America," will be exhibited at 50 venues across the country through 2018. Bunch has held several positions at the Smithsonian, including the National Museum of American History's (NMAH) associate director for Curatorial Affairs, assistant director for Curatorial Affairs at NMAH, and education specialist and historian at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum.

Bunch was appointed by President George W. Bush to the Commission for the Preservation of the White House in 2002 and reappointed by President Barack Obama in 2009. In 2005, Bunch was named one of the 100 most influential museum professionals in the 20th century by the American Association of Museums and in 2009, *Ebony Magazine* named him one of its 150 most influential African Americans.

For further information on the Newark Museum Legacy Gala, call 973-596-6579 or visit www.newarkmuseum.org.

#