



FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Mary Bridges
414-278-6199 / 414-530-8676
bridges@mpm.edu

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DENNIS KOIS NAMED NEW PRESIDENT OF MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM
*Milwaukee-area native brings experience at premier U.S. museums,
including Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian, to lead Milwaukee treasure*

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – The Milwaukee Public Museum Board of Directors today announced that it has chosen Dennis Kois, currently executive director of the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Boston, as MPM’s next president and CEO. Kois brings to the role a wide variety of experience and leadership at some of the country’s premier museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C.

“We’re very excited to bring Dennis, a Whitefish Bay native, back to Milwaukee and to MPM,” said Jay Williams, Chair-elect of the MPM Board of Directors. “Some of his first elementary school field trips were to the Milwaukee Public Museum, and he has a deep understanding that MPM’s collections, history of scholarship and community stature are important assets. His local roots, combined with a leadership style and museum philosophy honed at some of the nation’s top institutions, will help ensure that the MPM continues to play an increasingly important role in our diverse community.”

Williams announced in August that he would be stepping aside as president of MPM but would continue to serve the museum as board chairman. Kois will begin his new role May 1.

“Dennis has outstanding experience, a strong record of success and a clear vision for the future that put him in a strong position to continue to build on MPM’s successful turnaround,” Williams said. “A number of excellent candidates emerged during our search process, and

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Dennis stood out from the start. We believe he is the best person to ensure the museum’s mission and strategy continue to serve our members, the greater metropolitan Milwaukee community and all who visit the Milwaukee Public Museum.”

Kois has been Executive Director at the prestigious deCordova Sculpture Park & Museum in Boston since 2008 and prior to that, was Executive Director of the Grace Museum in Abilene, Texas. He has also served as Assistant Chief Designer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and as Chief Designer and Head of Publications and Digital Media of the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, which together serve as our national museums of Asian art. He has worked with partner museums in Asia and Europe on exhibitions and collections and served as an adjunct professor of the graduate program in Museum Studies at George Washington University.

Kois is an honors graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a bachelor’s degree in museum design, and has a master’s degree in museum studies from New York University. While at UWM, he served as an exhibition and graphic designer with the UWM Art Museum. Additionally, he has served as a lecturer and panelist on a variety of art- and museum-related topics. He is married and has two young children.

“I owe the start of my career in museums to the MPM field trips of my youth,” Kois said. “It was during those school visits that I discovered that MPM connected me to a world of ideas, history and culture that was, in the most literal sense of the word, transforming. There’s a great deal we can do to build on the good work of Jay Williams, the board and the talented MPM team to advance MPM as an example of how American museums can be even more central to our civic life and citizens. I love Milwaukee and MPM, and I’m excited to be coming home.”

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About the Milwaukee Public Museum

The Milwaukee Public Museum is a natural and human history museum located in downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The museum was chartered in 1882 and opened to the public in 1884. MPM has three floors of exhibits that encompass life-size dioramas, walk-through villages, world cultures, dinosaurs, a rain forest and a live butterfly garden, as well as the Daniel M. Soref National Geographic Dome Theater & Planetarium. The museum houses more than 4.5 million objects and hosts around 700,000 visitors each year.

The museum is operated by Milwaukee Public Museum, Inc., a private, non-profit company, and its facilities and collections are held in trust and supported by Milwaukee County for the benefit of the public.

a: 800 w. wells st., milwaukee, wi 53233
w: www.mpm.edu

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