



International African American Museum

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**A Decade of Research, Commitment and Determination Pays Off**  
*Vision of the International African American Museum Becomes a Reality*

**CHARLESTON, SC** – The City of Charleston and the Board of Directors of the International African American Museum (IAAM), a nonprofit corporation, and numerous public and private agencies, have been engaged for the better part of the past decade in extensive historical research and planning in order to create an extraordinary facility for our citizens and our visitors from throughout the world. The City and the Board of the IAAM are pleased to recount the success achieved thus far in establishing the IAAM and to announce the next phase in transforming this exciting vision into reality.

The IAAM will be located just steps away from the nationally significant historic site, of Gadsden’s Wharf. Owned by Revolutionary War patriot Christopher Gadsden, and built by the hands of enslaved Africans, the Wharf was the largest privately owned wharf - stretching from present day Calhoun Street to Laurens Street. It was also the most used entry point for enslaved Africans in North America. From 1803-1807, the final years of the international African slave trade, more than 70,000 enslaved Africans landed and were sold on Gadsden’s Wharf. At that time the population of Charleston was only 20,000 - half of whom were slaves. The African men, women and children sold at Gadsden’s Wharf labored on the profitable South Carolina rice plantations; the cotton plantations in the Upcountry; and the cotton and sugar plantations in the Louisiana Territory.

The Museum will adjoin the property of the National Park Service and the Fort Sumter National Park Site. The City and the IAAM will work with the National Park Service, to plan a reinterpretation of the grounds now known as Liberty Square to honor and recognize the presence of Gadsden’s Wharf and its newly discovered role in American history.

The 42,300 square foot Museum will be designed by the architectural firms of Moody Nolan in Columbus, Ohio and Antoine Predock of Albuquerque, New Mexico with exhibits designed by Ralph Appelbaum and Associates. Appelbaum was the exhibit designer for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; the new Visitor Reception Center at the United States Capitol; Clinton Museum; and many others. The Museum space will be important in presenting the impact of the presence of enslaved Africans and their descendants on American culture and commerce. “Most important, the IAAM will help facilitate the beginning of a dialogue or level of communication that can bring with it understanding, appreciation, peace and a sense of reconciliation for the residents of our city, our state and even our country. It’s an institution whose time has come, and there is no better place to build it than in Charleston,” states Wilbur Johnson, the IAAM Board Chair.



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The IAAM will narrate the journey of Africans from Africa to slavery in the United States; to freedom following the Civil War; their struggle from Jim Crow to Civil Rights to today; and, by extension, will also narrate an important part of the American experience itself. The IAAM will highlight Charleston's role in that journey and the significant contributions of African Americans to the country we know today. Mayor Riley adds, "I know America is increasingly interested in African American history finally being presented. For us to understand who we are as Americans and how our country came to be, it is important to understand the history of the arrival of African Americans and their role in helping to build our country and its institutions."

Construction of the Museum is anticipated to cost \$75 million. On Tuesday, October 22, the Charleston City Council unanimously voted in favor of awarding a \$12.5 million revenue bond to the IAAM. The funding will be provided through tourism industry revenues. The City and the IAAM will also seek funding from Charleston County. "I am in 100% support of this historical project and am honored to be a part of our region making national history," states Teddy Pryor, Chairman of Charleston County Council. Support will also be sought from the State of South Carolina and through additional private local, state and national fundraising efforts. Museum construction is estimated to begin January 2016 and be completed in January 2018.

In addition to the IAAM's cultural and social impact, the museum will have a significant economic impact as well. The IAAM is expected to have a \$30.8 million economic impact in the Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville MSA; and an estimated \$29.6 million impact in the state of South Carolina. Helen Hill, Executive Director of the Convention Visitor's Bureau sees the potential impact of the IAAM. She states, "Interest in Charleston's African American heritage has never been greater. A heritage attraction of this quality and depth would create substantial interest and media attention, ultimately generating new and repeat visitors to our community."

To support its efforts to meet the challenge of its \$75 million campaign goal, the IAAM leadership has formed a National Advisory Board. It includes many distinguished Americans including Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, Emmy Award winning actress Phylicia Rashad, Pulitzer Prize winning author Jon Meacham, hero of the Civil Rights Movement Congressman John Lewis, United States Representative and Assistant Democratic Party Leader James Clyburn, former Governor of Arizona and Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt, former Governor of South Carolina and Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, former Governors of South Carolina David Beasley and Jim Hodges, and many other distinguished citizens. A complete list of the members of the National Advisory Board is attached. The National Advisory Board is testament to the significance of IAAM and reflects the national interest and excitement about Charleston's role in helping to fully present the story of our country and the central role of African Americans in that history.

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## NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

- **Dennis W. Archer**  
*Served on Michigan Supreme Court, former Mayor of Detroit, 1<sup>st</sup> African American President of American Bar Association*
- **Jeanne Moutoussamy Ashe**  
*Arthur Ashe's widow, photographer*
- **Bruce Babbitt**  
*Former United States Secretary of Interior and Governor of Arizona*
- **David Beasley**  
*Former South Carolina Representative and Governor of South Carolina, Chairman-Center for Global Strategies*
- **Peg Breen**  
*President NYC Landmarks Conservancy, board member-Ellis Island and Governors Island*
- **Lonnie Bunch**  
*Founding Director-Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History, served on President George W. Bush Commission for the Preservation of the White House*
- **Marvin Chernoff**  
*Former advertising/public relations executive*
- **James Clyburn**  
*United States Representative, 1<sup>st</sup> African American in Congress from South Carolina since Reconstruction, founder of The James E. Clyburn Research and Scholarship Foundation, elected pres. of his NAACP youth chapter when he was 12 years old*
- **Pat Conroy**  
*Best-selling author, Citadel alum*
- **Morris Dees**  
*Co-founder/Chief trial counsel-Southern Poverty Law Center, awarded the ABA Medal-their highest honor*
- **David Dinkins**  
*Former Mayor of NYC, 1<sup>st</sup> and only African American to hold that position, Professor-Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs*



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- **Howard Dodson**  
*Director-Howard University Library, former director-Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, heavy involvement with African Burial Ground Project*
- **Don Fowler**  
*Former National Chair-DNC, Citadel Professor-Urban Politics, Fowler Communications*
- **Harvey Gantt**  
*Architect, 1<sup>st</sup> African American student at Clemson, former Mayor of Charlotte-their 1<sup>st</sup> African American mayor*
- **Marcia Hale**  
*President, Building America's Future Education Fund, Assistant to President Clinton and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at the White House*
- **Jim Hodges**  
*Former Governor of South Carolina, advisor/partner McQuire Woods*
- **J. Mac Holladay**  
*Founder/CEO-Market Street Services, Charleston and SC Chamber of Commerce*
- **Walter F. Johnson**  
*Retired Army Brigadier General, former defense contractor*
- **John Lewis**  
*United States Representative, one of the "Big Six" of Civil Rights movement*
- **Jon Meacham**  
*Pulitzer award winning author, Executive Editor-Random House, former co-host-PBS*
- **Marc H. Morial**  
*President/CEO-National Urban League, former Mayor of New Orleans, appointed to President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability*
- **Robert Moses**  
*Educator, leader in Civil Rights movement, founder of The Algebra Project*
- **Phylicia Rashad**  
*Nationally acclaimed actress, 1<sup>st</sup> African-American actress to win Tony Award for Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Play*
- **Richard W. Riley**  
*Former United States Secretary of Education, former SC Governor, Partner-Nelson Mullins law firm, honorary co-chair-World Justice Party*



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- **Cokie Roberts**  
*Journalist, author, political commentator, recipient Edward R. Murrow Award, appointed by President George W. Bush to Council on Service and Civic Participation*
- **Steve Roberts**  
*Cokie's husband, journalist, writer, political commentator, Professor of journalism and political communication at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs*
- **Kurt Schmoke**  
*Dean, Howard University Law School, former Mayor of Baltimore-their 1<sup>st</sup> African American mayor, Rhodes Scholar, former Assistant US Attorney, part of President Carter's Domestic Policy Staff*
- **Cleveland Sellers**  
*President, Voorhees College, former Director-African American Studies Program at USC, only person convicted/jailed during the 1968 Orangeburg Massacre, rec'd full pardon 25 years later*
- **Henry Tisdale**  
*President, Claflin University, NAACP Award-Educator of the Year, American Council on Education Commission on Effective Leadership*
- **Elie Wiesel**  
*Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, WWII concentration camp survivor, recipient-Nobel Peace, Presidential Medal of Freedom, Congressional Gold Medal, and Legion of Honor, Professor of religion-Boston University, author*
- **William Winter**  
*Former Governor of Mississippi, The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation on the Univ. of Miss. at Oxford, former member of President Clinton's Advisory Board on Race, special counsel in Jones Walker law firm's Government Relations Practice Group*