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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUMS WELCOMES  
2017-2020 BOARD MEMBERS**

*The 39 year old organization is the oldest and largest advocate of African American museums and museum professionals*

**Washington, DC (September 21, 2017)** The Association of African American Museums (AAAM) supports the historic, innovative, and contemporary programs, exhibitions, research, and development of African American museums and museum professionals nationwide. Since 1978, AAAM has supported the professional advancement of African American museums and museum professionals. Its membership base consists of over 300 Black museums nationwide and hundreds of museum professionals committed to the preservation of African-derived cultures. .

AAAM announces the election of three new board members, one returning board member, and one new officer. Newly elected to the board of directors are Malika Polk-Lee, Executive Director of the BB King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center (Indianola, MS); Eric Williams, Curator of Religion, National Museum of African American History & Culture (Washington D.C.); and Shirl Spicer, M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks (Silver Spring, MD). Returning to the board for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term is Myrtis Bedolla, Gallerist, Galerie Myrtis (Baltimore, MD); and LaNesha DeBardelaben, Senior V.P. of Education and Exhibits, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (Detroit, MI) was appointed board Secretary. Each new member will serve a three-year term.

“The election of these new board members comes at a pivotal moment in the evolution of AAAM, ” says AAAM president, Brian J. Carter. “With support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Association recently completed a National Needs Assessment of the African American museum field. The results provided immensely useful information about the current operations, potential opportunities, and pressing needs of the field. In response, AAAM has crafted a four year strategic plan that will guide its

priorities and activities toward addressing these needs. Along with the full Board, these new members will play an essential role implementing this plan in the coming years.”

Each year since 1978, AAAM has hosted a national conference designed to bring museum professionals of all levels together for networking, professional development and reflection upon the role that African American museums have in today’s increasingly diverse society. The AAAM also sponsors the Burroughs-Wright fellowship program, named after AAAM founders Margaret T. Burroughs and Charles H. Wright, which provides full financial support for two graduate students or first year museum professionals to attend the annual conference.

For more information about the Association of African American Museums, Visit: [www.blackmuseums.org](http://www.blackmuseums.org).