File #: 220148, **Version:** 0

Congratulating Eric Pryor on his appointment as President of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), making him the first Black President of PAFA.

WHEREAS, Eric Pryor became President of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) in January 2022. A strategic, creative, and collaborative leader, he brings over 25 years of experience in education, museum administration, and community-building initiatives to PAFA, America's first school and museum of fine arts; and

WHEREAS, Pryor joins PAFA from the Harlem School of the Arts (HSA), where he has served as President since 2015. An interdisciplinary cultural arts center that cultivates a strong sense of community and creative expression inspired by the rich history of Harlem, HSA serves over 2,000 students each year, on- and off-site, who study music, dance, theatre, and visual arts. During his tenure, he secured funding that enabled the school to undertake its first major renovation in 40 years; and

WHEREAS, Pryor previously served as Executive Director of The Center for Arts Education (CAE) in New York, providing direction and oversight for all of CAE's teaching and learning programs, professional development activities, advocacy and public engagement initiatives, and fundraising efforts; and

WHEREAS, Pryor was also Executive Director of the New Jersey State Museum (NJSM), known as "New Jersey's Smithsonian." As Executive Director, Pryor successfully revitalized this historic institution, which boasts a collection of over two million objects and specimens, the state's largest Planetarium, and 38,000 square feet of exhibition space, including a cultural history collection and a fine art collection; and

WHEREAS, Earlier in his career, Pryor served as President of the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey (VAC) in Summit, New Jersey. During his tenure at VAC, he developed and implemented a five-year strategic plan built around a $5.4 million capital campaign that expanded the VAC facility from 13,000 square feet to 24,000 square feet, with three new exhibition spaces and nine state-of-the-art studios for art classes; and

WHEREAS, Pryor began his arts career as Executive Director of the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation's Center for Arts and Culture (CAC) in Brooklyn, New York. CAC is the country's first and largest community development organization to use arts programming as a community-development tool. At CAC, he served as head curator and developed and managed several CAC programs including the Skylight Gallery and the Performing Arts/Presenting Program. He was also responsible for developing the Playwrights Den, a scriptwriters' workshop for young playwrights, and the Restoration Youth Arts Academy, a multidisciplinary arts training program serving 500 students on-site as well as 1,000 in New York City schools; and

WHEREAS, Pryor is a graduate of Tyler School of Art, Temple University (Master of Fine Arts, 1992) and Wayne State University (Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting, 1990). He completed Columbia University's Executive Leadership Program for Nonprofits in 1997; and

WHEREAS, Pryor is an active community volunteer and uses his educational and professional arts background

to advance the goals of organizations that he serves. Currently, he is a member of the Board of Directors of New Yorkers for Culture and Arts and City College of New York President's Advisory Board. Formerly, he served as a board member of Art Pride New Jersey and Paper Mill Playhouse and as an advisor for public arts projects for the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority; and

WHEREAS, Notably, Pryor is the first Black president of PAFA for a time of significant transition. Chair of the PAFA Board of Trustees Anne E. McCollum said, "At this point in our collective history, I think we're all transitioning. We are getting to this stage of being post-pandemic that has created a whole new world. He's a transformational leader. That could be the artist in him not willing to just accept the status quo. He wants to dive deeper, find out how we should be proceeding and make that happen"; and

WHEREAS, Chair McCollum further said, "We unanimously chose Eric Pryor as the next President of PAFA because he has all the qualities we hoped for in our next leader: he is strategic, collaborative, and innovative, with the sensibility of an artist. He will bring a new dynamic to our 216-year-old institution that will help us respond to our changing society. I'd like to thank everyone involved in our extensive and inclusive search process. We brought together students, faculty, staff and alumni, resulting in the best possible outcome as we move forward together as an institution"; and

WHEREAS, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and Chair of the Board of Governors Reginald M. Browne said, "Eric Pryor resonates with PAFA's shared core values as an institution - its traditions, commitment to diversity and inclusion as well as to education and stewardship, and its foundational bedrock of community. He made a palpable connection with the PAFA community during his visits here. I am confident that he will be a passionate advocate for PAFA's legacy and inspired by the work we have already begun to move toward our future"; and

WHEREAS, One of America's cornerstone cultural institutions, PAFA is poised to move forward into its next significant institutional chapter. A strategic, creative, and collaborative leader, Pryor is skilled at guiding institutions through transitions and will partner with PAFA's constituents to reimagine the organization and ensure its long-term sustainability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby congratulates Eric Pryor on his appointment as President of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), making him the first Black President of PAFA.

powered by Legistar™