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WAVE HILL NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Claudia Bonn, Executive Director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center, to succeed Kate French

Bronx, NY, February 4, 2008 – **Wave Hill announces the appointment of Claudia Bonn as Executive Director**, effective April 7. Ms. Bonn, Executive Director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center, succeeds Kate French, who has led the 28-acre public garden and cultural center in the Riverdale section of the Bronx for the past 17 years.

“I have known and loved Wave Hill for many years,” says Ms. Bonn, “and I am thrilled to join its talented staff and dedicated Board of Directors as we launch a new era for this magnificent institution. I’m equally honored to follow Kate French and, I hope, to add to her impressive contributions and vision.”

Wave Hill marked its 40th anniversary in 2005 with the launch of a two-year strategic planning effort led by the Board of Directors. The process culminated in a blueprint for capital improvements and programmatic advancement through 2012, but also embraced the transitions of both board and executive leadership, with the appointment of Cathy Marks Weinroth as the third Chair of the Board in December 2006 and now the appointment of Ms. Bonn as the sixth chief executive.

“I am thrilled by the Board’s selection of Claudia Bonn,” remarked Ms. French. “Her appointment guarantees a truly exciting future for Wave Hill. Experienced, confident and engaging, she is the perfect leader for one of our City’s most beloved public treasures.”

Claudia Bonn has served as the Film Society of Lincoln Center’s Executive Director since 2003 and has been an integral member of the staff for more than fifteen years, previously serving as Director of Administration and as Director of Development. Ms. Bonn’s management of the Film Society included overseeing the organization’s world-renowned annual programs, including the New York Film Festival, Gala Tribute and the New Directors/New Films series, as well as the publication of *Film Comment* magazine and the year-round operation of the Walter Reade Theater. She most recently spearheaded the Film Society’s \$45 million capital campaign to create the new Elinor Bunin-Munroe Film Center at Lincoln Center (scheduled to open in 2010) and began developing an after-school program to use film as a means to excite and develop New York City public school students’ appreciation of the arts. Prior to joining the Film Society’s staff, Ms. Bonn worked at American Ballet Theatre and the Joffrey Ballet in New York.



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The appointment follows Ms. French’s announcement last June that she would leave Wave Hill in spring 2008. During Ms. French’s tenure, Wave Hill has emerged as a vibrant and welcoming urban destination, with lively, contemporary programming in horticulture, education and the arts amidst a spectacular, world-renowned garden landscape. Ms. French has overseen the expansion of Wave Hill’s arts and cultural programs and the growth of education offerings for Bronx students. Visitor services also advanced, including the establishment of café and catering food services, expansion of the gift shop and the creation of tour and event business to generate earned income. Capital improvements, including renovation of Glyndor House and development of the Perkins Visitor Center, have dramatically opened public access to Wave Hill facilities and increased compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. Wave Hill’s first endowment campaign, undertaken in the 1990s, has become a cornerstone of support for the institution. Today, Wave Hill maintains a \$6 million annual operating budget, sustained by a \$20 million endowment. Public funding provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs underwrites some 15% of operations. Ms. French also has served many years on the Steering Committee of the Cultural Institutions Group, an association of 34 prominent New York City cultural institutions operating under agreements with the City, which—like Wave Hill—occupy City-owned buildings and land.

“We are confident that the transition will be smooth thanks to Kate’s meticulous stewardship,” stated Wave Hill Chair Cathy Marks Weinroth enthusiastically. “It was hard to imagine life without Kate, and then we met Claudia. We’re looking forward to the new infusion of energy that flows naturally in such positive circumstances. It’s great news for Wave Hill.”

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About Wave Hill

A 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades in the northwest Bronx, Wave Hill’s mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.

The former private estate of the Perkins-Freeman Family, Wave Hill is operated by an independent non-profit organization incorporated in 1965; its buildings and grounds are owned by the City of New York. Wave Hill is a member of the Cultural Institutions Group, an association of 34 New York City cultural institutions operating under agreements with the City, most of which occupy City-owned buildings and land. With assistance from the Mayor, the Bronx Borough President and Bronx representatives in the City Council and State Legislature, Wave Hill’s operation is supported, in part, with public funds through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts—a state agency, the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program of the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Foundations, corporations and individuals in the community contribute vital additional support.

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