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Wave Hill Announces New Leadership at a Premier Horticultural Gem

Incoming Executive Director Brings a Vision for Environmental, Sustainable Equity for Culture and Community

Bronx, NY, June 28, 2023—Wave Hill is delighted to announce the appointment of Ray B. Oladapo-Johnson as the public garden and cultural center’s President and Executive Director beginning in late July. Mr. Oladapo-Johnson brings more than 20 years of experience as a horticulturist and senior executive managing public green spaces in urban areas. He comes to Wave Hill directly from his role as Vice President, Park Operations and the Chief Safety Officer at Friends of the High Line, a position he has held for six years. A strategic and sophisticated leader, at the High Line he has supervised a staff of more than 100 across multiple operational functions, oversaw extensive capital and restoration projects and partnered closely with all areas of the organization.

Prior to his work at the High Line, he spent seven years as Director of Park Operations at the Emerald Necklace Conservancy in Boston, MA, and eight years at the Wildlife Conservation Society in the Bronx, NY, as Curator and Director of Horticulture. A horticulturist by training and at heart, Oladapo-Johnson is a strategic thinker with deep, operational experience in public green spaces, domestically and internationally. Building equity in those spaces, working collaboratively with city governments and managing staff with energy and imagination, are all testimony to his ability to bring transformative leadership to Wave Hill.



Ray Oladapo-Johnson. Photo: Beowulf Sheehan.

“Ray Oladapo-Johnson stood out as someone with deep knowledge and love of horticulture, a commitment to inclusion and a decades-long admiration for Wave Hill,” commented Board Co-Chairs Ezra Borut and Sarah Gund. “He is passionate about our mission and will bring deep operational

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experience, creativity and joyful energy and excitement to his new role. We are thrilled to have him as our next leader of Wave Hill.”

Mr. Oladapo-Johnson says that he “first visited Wave Hill more than 20 years ago, and this remarkable cultural destination and oasis has served as my navigational north star since. I am deeply honored to have the opportunity to play a part in linking Wave Hill’s past and future in the present, honoring its roots and appeal while building a diverse community that can carry the organization into the future.”

Over the past eight years, under the leadership of outgoing President and Executive Director Karen Meyerhoff, Wave Hill has raised its profile as a leader in the field of ornamental horticulture, as an innovator in place-based contemporary arts and pioneer in environmental education, partnering with premier organizations across the country and bringing value to underserved communities in the region. Always a peaceful oasis for urban dwellers, Wave Hill became indispensable during the recent pandemic and quickly adapted to a hybrid world, extending the reach of its programs. Mr. Oladapo-Johnson steps into the organization with a talented staff and dedicated board of directors to support his vision for taking Wave Hill forward into the future.

Mr. Oladapo-Johnson’s appointment by a board vote was the culmination of a six-month, national search process conducted by a search committee comprised of Wave Hill board members, staff, the institution’s Friends of Horticulture members and other stakeholders. Guided by executive search firm Isaacson, Miller, the search committee identified three finalists from more than 300 potential applicants.

About Wave Hill

A 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, 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.

Wave Hill Incorporated is an independent non-profit cultural institution governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The City of New York owns the buildings and grounds of Wave Hill. With the assistance of the Bronx Borough President and Bronx representatives in the City Council and State Legislature, Wave Hill’s operations are supported with public funds through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; the National Endowment for the Arts; and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



HOURS: Open all year, Tuesday–Sunday, 10AM–5:30PM. Marco Polo Stufano Conservatory 10AM–Noon; 1–4PM.

ADMISSION TO THE GROUNDS: \$10 adults, \$6 students and seniors 65+, \$4 children 6-18. Free Thursdays. Free to Wave Hill Members, children under 6.

DIRECTIONS at wavehill.org.

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