

Feb. 15, 2024

**Media only:** Katie Hondorf (202) 633-8523; hondorfc@si.edu  
**Media website:** [americanart.si.edu/press](https://americanart.si.edu/press)

## **Robert C. Davidson Jr. Appointed Chair of the Smithsonian American Art Museum Commission**

### ***Business Leader and Art Collector Has Been a Member of the Museum's Board Since 2016***

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has announced today that Robert “Bob” C. Davidson Jr. of Pasadena, California, has been appointed chair of the museum’s board of commissioners for a four-year term. Davidson has been a member of the museum’s board since 2016 and was the chair of the collection committee from 2021 through 2023.

The museum’s board of commissioners was established in 1908 as an advisory board that meets twice a year in Washington, D.C., to counsel the director about matters of policy and fundraising, and to review proposed major acquisitions. Davidson is the first African American chair of the museum’s commission in the organization’s history.

“As a noted art collector and business executive, Bob Davidson brings important expertise and connections in the arts to this new leadership role,” said Stephanie Stebich, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. “He has championed the collecting mission of the museum as well as provided knowledge and experience of strategic, financial and public governance matters.”

Davidson is the retired chairman, CEO and founder of Surface Protection Industries, which in the past 30 years became one of the top African American-owned manufacturing companies in the United States. Prior to owning his own business, he co-founded and was vice president of the Urban National Corporation, a private venture capital firm that raised a fund for investments into U.S. minority-controlled businesses.

Davidson is an avid art collector with one of the country’s finest collections of African American art, which he and his wife, Faye, frequently have lent to major museums for public viewing. Davidson holds a bachelor’s degree and honorary doctorate of law from Morehouse College and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Chicago.

Currently, Davidson’s board affiliations include the Art Center College of Design (chairman emeritus); Broadway Financial Corporation; Cedars-Sinai Medical Center (life member); City First Broadway; Jacobs Engineering; Morehouse College (chairman emeritus); The Huntington, Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens; Toyota Motor North America’s Diversity Advisory Board; and the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business advisory council.

“I am incredibly honored to continue my work with the Smithsonian American Art Museum as chair of its board of commissioners,” Davidson said. “I believe wholeheartedly in its mission of sharing the stories of our nation through American art and craft to inspire reflection, spark dialogue and build connection. Since joining the commission in 2016, I am proud of the work we have done thus far and look forward to implementing the museum’s newest strategic plan and to strategically expanding the national collections.”

The museum’s commission currently is composed of 25 arts, business and community leaders from across the United States. The commissioners contribute a wide range of perspectives, professional experiences and collecting interests to help advance the museum’s mission.

### **About the Smithsonian American Art Museum**

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is the flagship museum in the United States for American art and craft. It is home to one of the most significant and inclusive collections of American art in the world. The museum’s main building, located at Eighth and G streets N.W., is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. The museum’s Renwick Gallery, a branch museum dedicated to contemporary craft, is located on Pennsylvania Avenue at 17th Street N.W. is closed temporarily. Check online for [current hours and admission information](#). Admission is free. Follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). Smithsonian information: (202) 633-1000. Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Website: [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

###

**Note to editors:** A high-resolution image of Davidson is available via [Dropbox](#).