

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

# ROCK & ROLL

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## HALL OF FAME™

### **Rock & Roll Hall of Fame names Nwaka Onwusa as Vice President and Chief Curator and celebrates the impact of her predecessor Karen Herman**

*Key promotions from within recognize contributions from talented, diverse female leaders*

**CLEVELAND, OH (September 10, 2020)** – As the [Rock & Roll Hall of Fame](#) celebrates our Museum’s 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and continues to move forward in bold new ways, we are pleased to announce that Nwaka Onwusa has been promoted to Chief Curator & Vice President of Curatorial Affairs, succeeding Karen Herman, who recently announced her plans to step down September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Nwaka will join the Rock Hall’s senior leadership team and provide leadership and vision to the Curatorial division, which includes permanent, traveling and digital exhibitions, museum redesign creative projects, artifact collections, and library and archives. The announcement comes on the heels of Nwaka’s impactful work on three new Rock Hall exhibits – the *2020 Hall of Fame Inductee Exhibit*, *Induction All Access: Photography by Kevin Mazur* (virtual exhibit) and [It’s Been Said All Along: Voices of Rage, Hope and Empowerment](#), on which Nwaka served as lead curator and Museum spokesperson for local, regional, and national interviews.

Prior to joining the Rock Hall in 2019, Nwaka spent a decade researching, developing and curating more than twenty impactful exhibits for The GRAMMY Museum at L.A. LIVE, as well as satellite and traveling exhibits. She specializes in creating experiences that are informative and immersive, and that celebrate the diversity of musical expression.

“Nwaka is a dynamic curator with strong connections to contemporary artists, a deep knowledge of rock & roll, a keen interest in the power of museums and an understanding of the expansive reach of digital engagement. I’m honored to name her to this post and welcome her diverse voice to our leadership team,” said Greg Harris, CEO of Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

“I was already enamored by the Rock Hall and being a part of this dynamic team. I am now honored and excited to lead in this role and continue to build on the excellence of the leadership before me. The horizon is rich with amazing opportunities and through music, I look forward to seeing not only my vision but the Museum’s come to fruition” said Nwaka.

In a six-year tenure, Nwaka’s predecessor Karen Herman led the curation of 50+ exhibits and galleries, including the blockbuster [Play It Loud: Instruments of Rock & Roll](#), co-organized with The Met, *Stay Tuned: Rock on TV* and *Louder Than Words: Rock, Power, Politics*. Visitors experience Karen’s creative vision throughout the Rock Hall, including the popular *Power of Rock* immersive theater experience; *The Garage*, an innovative interactive exhibit where fans can learn and play real rock & roll instruments; the Rock Hall plaza, featuring the iconic LONG

LIVE ROCK art installation and many redesigned interior spaces including the retail store and café. Karen produced dozens of interviews featuring artists such as Bono, Alice Cooper, Gloria Estefan, Tom Morello, Cyndi Lauper, Keith Richards, Jimmy Page, Paul Simon, Ringo Starr, Taylor Swift, and Bill Withers. She also hosted live onstage interviews, including Darlene Love and the MTV Original VJs.

“We are deeply grateful for Karen’s many accomplishments and tremendous impact on the Museum” said Greg Harris, “Her creative vision and incredible execution have helped us transform the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and will be felt by visitors for years to come.”

Several other key Rock Hall staff promotions and expanded roles were announced internally this week as well, including:

**Jennifer Bittner** has been promoted to Director of People & Analytics. Jennifer now drives employee engagement and performance through all personnel activities related to policy, payroll, and benefits in addition to performing compensation and staffing analysis.

**Vicky Dorsey** has been promoted to Director of Network Engineering. Vicky now manages all Rock Hall network and technology infrastructure systems including enterprise hardware and software, storage, cyber security, network access, and POS system needs as well as IT vendor management.

**Andy Leach** is now Senior Director of Collections & Library & Archives. In this expanded role, Andy will lead a unified team providing preservation and access of all archival, artifact, and library collections. Andy will now oversee both the Library team and the Museum’s collections team.

**Becky Machovec** has been promoted to Director of Foundation Relations. In addition to overseeing donor records, gift processing, and CRM activity, Becky will lead funder cultivation, stewardship, and grant writing for both foundation and government entities.

**Shelby Morrison** has been promoted to Director of Curatorial Operations & Artist Relations. In her new role Shelby will take the lead on prioritization and execution of exhibits. She will focus the team on elevating exhibits by leveraging artist relationships, relevant content, and current events.

**Ashley Walker** has been promoted to Director of Individual Giving. Ashley now leads the growth of the museum’s annual fund with emphasis on our donor circle. Ashley will identify, cultivate, and steward relationships with donors and members to maximize philanthropic support.

Of these staff moves, Greg Harris said, “I’m excited to recognize the great work of those being promoted, as well as the work of our leaders who developed them. These changes highlight that at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame we value execution, collaboration, and creativity and firmly believe that diverse teams perform better.”

**About the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame**

Rock Connects Us. Our mission is clear: To engage, teach and inspire through the power of rock & roll. We share stories of the people, events and songs that shape our world through digital content, innovative exhibits, live music, and engaging programs. Join the millions who love it as much as you do. Experience us live or online – Visit [rockhall.com](http://rockhall.com) or follow the Rock Hall on Facebook ([@rockandrollhalloffame](https://www.facebook.com/rockandrollhalloffame)), Twitter ([@rockhall](https://twitter.com/rockhall)), Instagram ([@rockhall](https://www.instagram.com/rockhall)) and YouTube ([youtube.com/rockhall](https://www.youtube.com/rockhall)). Long Live Rock!

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