

Council Connections

3.25.24

Special Edition



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Happy Spring to All!

What a full spring of learning, connecting and service activities we have to enjoy together! Just as the flowers are popping out, showing their beautiful variety of textures and colors, so are The Council's Volunteer Opportunities - expanding and blooming!

We are excited to announce a new and full array of the many ways that each Active (and Associate) Member can contribute to the growth and excellence of our service organization. Listed below are the Volunteer Opportunities, which now integrate and support The Council's organization chart.

Many, many thanks to all who worked on "thinking out of the box" to include additional volunteer opportunities and provide such great descriptions!! There are a variety of ways to serve on The Council and utilize everyone's time, talent, expertise and resources for the benefit of VMFA!



Message from Nan Boyd, Council President

Council Volunteer Opportunities

Council Service to VMFA:

Visitor Services

Entrance Ambassadors (Ask Me Ambassadors) - Welcome and greet all visitors, answer questions, and introduce yourselves as volunteers on The Council. Promote joining The Council as volunteers when appropriate. When needed, assist with checking coats and backpacks.

Atrium Ambassadors (Museum Ambassadors) - Assist visitors with finding desired galleries to visit, provide info about the Museum, assistance with technology and audio guides, and introduce yourselves as volunteers on The Council. Promote joining The Council as volunteers when appropriate. (Interview required)

School Group Ambassadors (School Group Greeters) - Welcome students and educators, introduce them to their assigned Tour Guide, and/or direct them to galleries.

VMFA Event Ambassadors - Support special events for VMFA members and the public at the Museum. Greet attendees, take tickets. Introduce yourselves as members of The Council, volunteers for the Museum.

Conservation & Collections

Gallery Care Assistants - Assist in caring for VMFA's permanent gallery exhibits during pre-opening hours of the Museum. (Interview required)

Education

Youth & Family Program Assistants - Assist with materials, art activities, and logistics for programs. (Interview required)

Floral Arranging

Hirschler Flower Atrium Display - Design and assemble a large floral arrangement for the Atrium once a week. (Interview required)

Fleurs de Loo – Place new floral arrangements and remove older ones in designated museum public restrooms.

Luncheon Centerpieces– Assist in floral arrangements for Council luncheon tables and other events.

Library of VMFA

Project Assistants – Staff the reference desk to answer basic questions and render assistance. There are also occasional opportunities to work on special projects with the librarians.

VMFA Membership Calls Assistants – Make courtesy and stewardship calls to new and renewing VMFA members on a weekly basis in The Council office in the Pauley Center. Introduce yourselves as members of The Council, volunteers for the Museum. Promote joining The Council when appropriate.

Sculpture Garden Assistants – Assist the VMFA staff horticulture team as needed on the outdoor campus of VMFA, planting, weeding, bed preparation, etc.

VMFA Shop

Sales Floor Assistants – Provide friendly customer service, merchandise knowledge, gift wrapping, restocking displays, and assistance with customer selections for purchasing. Introduce yourselves as members of The Council and talk about opportunities to join and volunteer for the Museum. Assist with Shop events. (Interview required)

Tour Guide Services

Gallery Tours - After being accepted by the museum into the Tour Guide Program, participating in months-long education sessions and passing the Gallery Tour practicum, provide Gallery Tours to walk-in museum visitors and school tours for elementary, middle, high school, and college groups on a twice a month calendar per Tour Guide. Docent/Tour Guides are also called upon to lead Reserved and VIP tours as scheduled by the museum, and to lead tours in support of Council activities, including Lecture Luncheons, MEP programs, New Member Orientation programs, New Member Recruitment programs, Book Chats, and other Council events.

Council Operations:

Communications

Council Handbook/Directory - Assists with obtaining content, compiling, editing, and proofreading the membership directory and informational handbook for Council members. Works with printer on final publication and distribution.

Writing/Editing - Volunteer as a writer, reporter or editor of *Council Connections*, The Council's online magazine of news and information about Council activities and upcoming events as well as news about VMFA.

Photography - Amateur or professional photographer to photographically record activities and special events for *Council Connections* and/or for the Council historic archives.

Membership

Recruitment/Outreach - Enthusiastic group of Council members who develop and implement new member recruitment campaigns and events for The Council. Works with all Council members to recruit new members for The Council.

Registration & Dues - Processes all incoming applications for Council membership. Invoices, collects and records Council membership dues. Maintains records of Council members' status and information. Works closely with New Member Recruitment and New Member Orientation Committees.

New Member Welcome & Orientation – Plans and implements welcome event(s) for new Council members. Acts as hosts for the New Member events designed to meet, greet, and educate council members who have recently joined our organization.

Technology Services to The Council

Tech Team - Manage and support information technology tools used by The Council. Applications supported include Event Management, Membership, Website, Volunteer Logistics, Zoom and other Communication Services. Emphasis on working with other Council groups to support all phases of volunteer activities. (Interview required)

Council Membership Enrichment Programs:

Event & Trip Planning – Create, plan, and manage a variety of enrichment, learning and social opportunities for Council members. They include Connect & Learn programs at VMFA, Artistic Site Visits in town, Out of Town Day Trips, Lectures, Book Chats and other events.

Fine Arts & Flowers 2024 – All members will be called on to participate and assist with a variety of activities to support The Council's signature fundraising event to benefit VMFA.

Contact the following for more information:

Sherrill Smith, Chair of Council Service to VMFA: coachet@comcast.net

Frank Dellinger, Chair of Council Operations: wfrankd10319@gmail.com

MaryMoss Walker, VP/Chair of Membership Enrichment Programs: mmwalker901@gmail.com

Alex McGrath, Co-Chair Fine Arts & Flowers 2024: amcgrath2@aol.com

Birch Douglass, Co-Chair Fine Arts & flowers 2024: birchdouglass@comcast.net

Spring MEP Events

The Valentine - Historic Wickham House and Sculpting

Thursday, April 4 - 9:45 am – 12:00 pm

This event is full, but you can sign up for the Wait List [here](#).

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month

In recognition of The Council of VMFA, join us on Friday, April 12 at 3:00 pm in the Claiborne Robertson Room for an Ice Cream Social. You should have received your invitation on March 21. If you missed the invitation, please contact Stephanie Cooperstein at 804-340-1516.

Council Recruiting Event on Thursday, April 18 from 10 -11am; Birch Douglass Private Dining Room. Tell your friends and neighbors about this opportunity to learn more about The Council. Click [here](#) for details.

Welcome 20 New Council Members!!

Christopher Brooks

Gail Bourner

Amy Burman

Alice Crosland

Jay Denny

Rose Detmer

Susan Dunlap

Amalia Edwards

Steven Eichner

Meredith Espino

Maura Gaenzle

Marilyn Herold

Marsha Hembrick

Carol Hofer

William "Will" Maragos

Susannah Smith

Jennifer Tarry

Victor Vega

Sam Waters

Edith Weiss

*It's time to celebrate! We are now over 400 members!
To be exact...we are at 416 members!*

Volunteer Spotlight

Charlie Caldwell and Scott Finn

Charlie Caldwell and Scott Finn are a couple that teams wherever they are...national, international, and now local! It was the Rodin exhibit followed by lunch at Amuse restaurant that converted their visit to Charlie's family into their own "living in Richmond". For Charlie, Richmond was more than a homecoming - his first visit to VMFA was on a 7th grade school trip from Staunton; at that time the "Knight in Armor" looked down upon visitors at the original entrance on the Boulevard and the young boy was "smitten" by the museum. He knew he wanted a career in the Arts and chose to pursue painting and scenic design; he obtained a degree in the Arts from Eckerd College and a Masters in Drama from University of Virginia. In 1979, Charlie began as assistant, then associate and progressed to Resident Scenic Designer in the Virginia Museum Theatre at the VMFA. In fact, on the stage in 1985 he painted the backdrops for the first presentation of The Nutcracker by the Richmond Ballet Professional Company...he created the magic behind the music! Ultimately, a unique sequence began as Charlie while working as Resident Scenic Designer at Virginia Museum Theatre received a VFMA Fellows Grantto be followed in the next generation by his daughter Sidney who received a VMFA Fellowship to study Metalsmithing at the Cranbrook Academy of Art.



Charlie Caldwell and Scott Finn

Charlie's career is Fine Arts and Theatre, and Scott is an architect and educator. Scott earned an AB in Architecture and Urban Design at Princeton, and his M. ARCH at Yale. Scott was the Ann and Batey Gresham Professor and Associate Program Chair in Architecture at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture at Auburn University. He was the Director of the School's International Studies Program in Rome which was a collaboration with the Arkansas Rome Center for Architecture and the Humanities; he studied the layering of architecture that characterizes Rome. This included a sabbatical in Rome and a Visiting Scholar

position at the American Academy in Rome! Scott says, “Architecture and Urban design are an opportunity to understand our place in the community...and the continuum to our collective culture and society.” Hence, one of his interests continues to be contextually sensitive design relevant to a particular community. His work formally carries on in community architectural planning, and preservation having served on the Facilities Committee of Auburn’s University Board of Trustees and as Director of Design for the new town of Mt. Laurel, Alabama.

While Charlie’s family has a 200-year legacy in Fishersville, Va., he and Scott, however, are both living their life benefiting the community of Richmond. Scott says that living here is not anonymous; they know their neighbors and the community. They contribute to the community by serving at St Stephen’s on the Cook Team for Mayfair House and the Hospitality Committee. They are both on the Ballet Advisory Board (on the Hospitality Committee), but Charlie is the first Designer Emeritus for the Ballet! He is looking forward to the renovation of the theatre at VMFA which will host the Richmond Ballet’s Studio series.

When they joined The Council at VMFA, Sharon Pederson was selected to mentor them. Sharon and Charlie then discovered that they had gone to the same high school; Charlie offered that he and Scott cannot go to any city without seeing someone that Scott knows. In the galleries, their love of the Arts is shared as they enjoy the quiet before the museum opens. While cleaning what needs to be done, they also can observe the behind-the-scenes activities of art handlers and curators. As it happens, several of the museum workers had worked at the theatre previously with Charlie.

They feel that VMFA’s breadth of programming is wonderful ... from Saunders to Bey to Wright to Dirty South. That there is inclusion of talented local artists is especially appealing to them. Their suggestion for The Council’s Strategic initiative in 2023-2024 is to widen the scope of volunteers to include younger age groups. They noted that this was started previously with “Jumping in July”; there is also a direct reach out to attendees planned at jazz nights by Council volunteers.

- Pam Chavis, MD -

"The volunteers are my **'extra person'** every Wednesday!"



"Our hope is to make this a peaceful outdoor space for students and staff at the Studio School to enjoy once again."



"We are working to create a pollinator paradise that will help to support birds, beneficial insects, and the wellness of our guests and community members alike."



Michael Partusch, Lead Horticulturist *In His Own Words*

You only have to spend just a few moments talking with Michael Partusch, Lead Horticulturist, to know he truly loves what he does! In a recent conversation, Michael readily agreed to answer the question we have heard most often this spring: *What will the gardens look like this year?*

“This spring, I am excited to see the second year of growth of the new pollinator garden we installed last year next to Robinson House. Also, the gardens we installed last year at Pauley Terrace and loading dock are beginning to emerge. These gardens should really start to stretch out their legs this year and have a real impact on all living things passing through; insects and humans alike. The bed to the right of the main entrance with Hinoki false cypress will be refreshed. The colorful pots throughout campus will receive fresh plant material in late April as weather allows. The juniper, holly, and arborvitae centerpieces in these pots will remain in place to continue growing through this season. Moving forward, we want to have impact by supplementing with annuals instead of leaning on them entirely. Replacing everything every year is not congruent with our efforts to shift to more sustainable practices.

To satisfy any curiosities, the planters on the upper Belvedere went through quite a bit this winter. Hundreds of old stumps from a previous planting were removed and about a foot of 50/50 compost topsoil mix was added. Now that this space is ready for the next chapter, we will be planting a diverse array of perennials, focusing on native varieties as well as cultivars that appropriately compliment our climate in central Virginia. Once again, we are working to create a pollinator paradise that will help to support birds, beneficial insects, and the wellness of our guests and community members alike. ”

If you have glanced at the Studio School recently, you most likely have noticed a fresh new look! The trim around all the windows has been painted white and new stones, selected to blend with the new look, fill the drip edge surrounding the building. While work continues on the building exterior, the horticulture team is in the process of reworking the grounds. Michael recently shared details about the project. “The main courtyard will see a new bird and pollinator garden intended to give year-round interest for aesthetics as well.



The much smaller rear courtyard will become a nice shade garden. We worked very hard to keep the existing mature Kousa dogwood in place. Our hope is to make this a peaceful outdoor space for students and staff at Studio School to enjoy once again. We will convert the side yard to turf to keep from overwhelming the property with mulch and floral upkeep. All of these choices are meant to lift up the grounds making it both inviting and inspiring to spend time there. Plant choice will echo that of the main campus as a way of helping to connect the two spaces."

Since Michael began his work at VMFA a year ago, he has developed an extraordinary working relationship with his volunteers, and he is always eager to share a laugh with them, to sing their praises, and to applaud the excellent work they do each Wednesday! "All of this vision and push has been propped up by a small group of phenomenally dedicated and hard working volunteers: **Barrett Brown, Evans Dowdy, Harriet Waldrop, Hilary Cifu, Johanna Gattuso, Leni Friedman, LuAnn Tarren, Peg Tipple, and soon to join us - Wade Thrift.** I look forward to chatting about life, plants, traveling, and just about anything else with them while we all get dirt under our fingernails together. There is a reciprocal relationship here. They are "my extra person" every Wednesday morning and I make sure to let them know how much I value their presence. I tried to lay them off over the winter and they would not have it. They continued to buckle down and bundle up and never suspended operation. I have been quite pressed for time with so much taking place at once and they step right in, take the baton, and continue toward the finish line even when I have to be away while they are on site. They are always good for a laugh and they show up each week for the right reason: the betterment of our community through the VMFA. This is where their loyalties lie. I think I have the best volunteers because they actually *volunteer* to come out each and every week and do the hardest work on campus."

- Michael Partusch - *Volunteers on Page 10 – (l to r top row): Wade Thrift, LuAnn Tarren, Barrett Brown, and Peg Tipple*



Evans Dowdy



Hilary Cifu



Leni Friedman



Johanna Gattuso

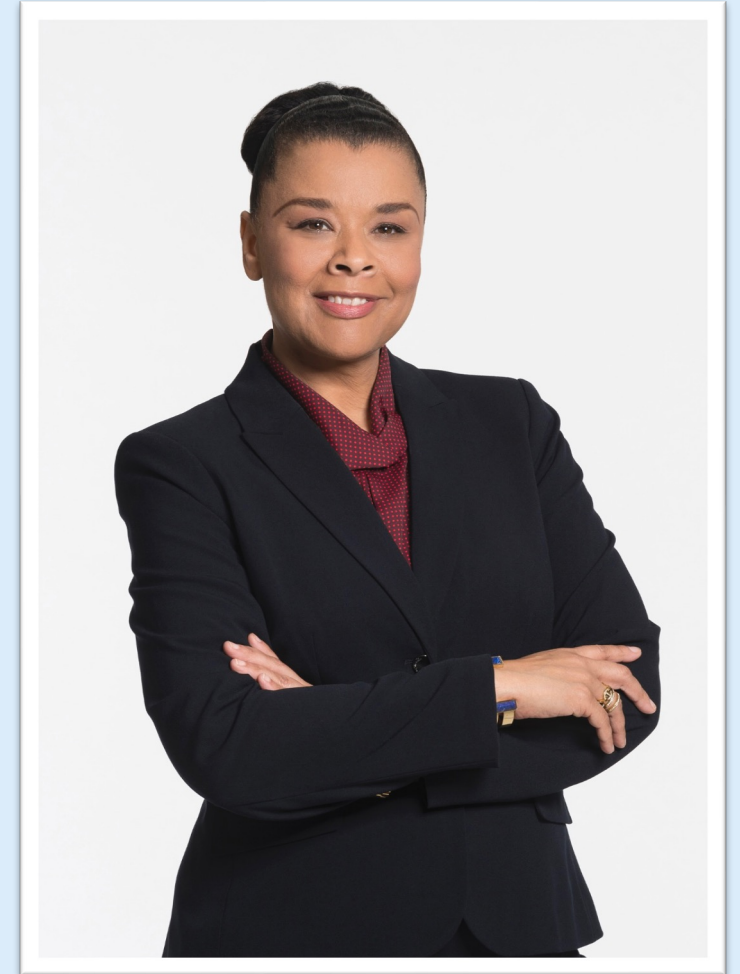
VMFA Staff Profiles

A Conversation with Kimberly Wilson

In her role at VMFA, Kimberly Wilson prefers to stay in the background and always considers herself to be the “cheerleader” for the Museum Operations Leadership Team (MOLT). She agreed to spend some time with me to discuss her leadership role at VMFA and how The Council supports that role.

Kimberly joined VMFA in December of 2015 after serving as Executive Director of Human Resources and Client Services at the George Washington University. She was hired into the role of Deputy Director for Human Resources and later became the Chief Operating Officer/CHRO (Chief Human Resources Officer), Deputy Director for Human Resource Services, Museum Operations, and Volunteers. Council volunteer activities directly support her organization including Gallery Care, Gardens, Shop Floor, Library, Membership Calls, Hirschler Flowers, Fleur de Loo, Ask Me Ambassadors, Event Ambassadors, School Group Greeters, Member Event Ambassadors, and Education, Youth and Family programs. She greatly appreciates the current support provided by The Council and she expects that the need for Council support will grow when the museum completes the expansion plan. “Volunteers are essential to the operation of the museum. We appreciate the time and talent that Council members contribute to the museum on a daily basis.”

“The Council, which is ingrained in the fabric of VMFA, helps to extend the reach of the museum into the community.” Council members are very visible to VMFA visitors particularly in the roles of Greeters and Ambassadors.



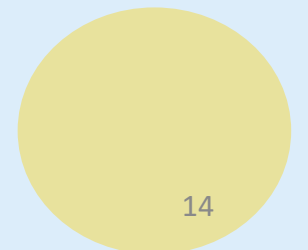
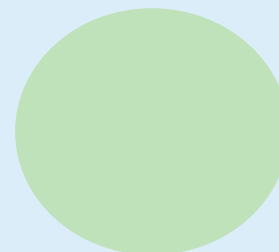
The Council also directly supports the five core strategies in the VMFA Strategic Plan:

- Center principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) throughout our organizational practices.
- Offer a range of curator-led, visitor-centered art experiences that engage, captivate, and delight a diverse mix of participants.
- Bring art and education experiences to every corner of Virginia.
- Grow the museum's reputation in the field, align its public brand, and promote the museum's contributions to the Commonwealth by telling VMFA's story.
- Build the organizational, financial, technological, and learning capacity needed to achieve the Strategic Plan.

Kimberly is looking forward to Fine Arts & Flowers 2024 and the support that her organization will provide to that event, as well as the financial support that the event will provide to VMFA. Her hope is that The Council will continue to contribute to the growth of the reputation of the museum.

While Kimberly's role requires her attention 365 days a year, including support of after-hours museum activities, she has found time to earn an MBA degree and plans to pursue a PhD next year. Kimberly also enjoys photography and hopes to someday publish photos of her family's ancestral migration path.

- Diane Barbour -



Howell Perkins **Imaging Rights Licensing Coordinator**

Howell Perkins may not be the longest-serving employee at VMFA, but he comes close. With 30-plus years of service, he's seen a lot of change and growth.

His title is Imaging Rights Licensing Coordinator. For many years, he was also the museum's Photo Archivist. But responsibility for the photo archives has shifted to the VMFA Library, and Kate Kaluzny has become VMFA's Photo Archivist. Perkins now focuses on requests that come from scholars, educators, students, and publishers and other museums that ask to reproduce photographs and digital images of artwork that belongs to VMFA.

He works with VMFA curators to make sure the museum approves of the use. Then he provides the image. But sometimes VMFA owns only the work of art but not the underlying copyright to use the image elsewhere. That's where coordination comes in. Sometimes the task becomes more complicated, such as when the copyright-holder has died and permission has to come from the heirs. It often becomes a matter of detective work to locate the heirs.

Perkins came to work at VMFA in 1989 after earning (almost) two degrees. A native of Charlottesville, he graduated from Washington & Lee with a bachelor's degree in European studies, then took the required classes for his master's in art history and museum studies at Virginia Commonwealth University but never wrote the thesis that would have completed a master's in art history. While pursuing a master's degree and before joining VMFA, he worked several part-time jobs, mostly at Richmond-area B. Dalton bookstores.

What are his favorite galleries or works of art? "All of it," he said decisively. "All aspects of the museum are fabulous."

Besides tennis, Perkins' hobby outside his work life is gardening with flowers and bushes. The newest bushes in his garden are azaleas. He comes by his love of gardening naturally.

His grandmother, Hazelhurst Perkins, was a past president of the Albemarle Garden Club and was in charge of the Monticello garden restoration from 1939 to 1941. She co-authored a gardening book that is still in print, the third edition of "Thomas Jefferson's Flower Garden at Monticello," published in 1971.



The Fine Arts & Flowers (FA&F) Committees are hard at work finalizing plans for the October 23 – 27 event. Now is a good time to explore the various volunteer opportunities and decide the volunteer assignments to which you would like to commit. There are many activities to choose from. If you are a relatively new Council member, this is an opportunity to meet other members who do not share your regular volunteer duties.

Logistics volunteer opportunities include delivering flowers to designers, moving finished floral designs to gallery pedestals, assisting experts in watering floral designs, and much more!

At the Information Desk you will greet visitors, hand out materials, and answer questions. Wayfinders will help visitors navigate the galleries and find specific exhibits.

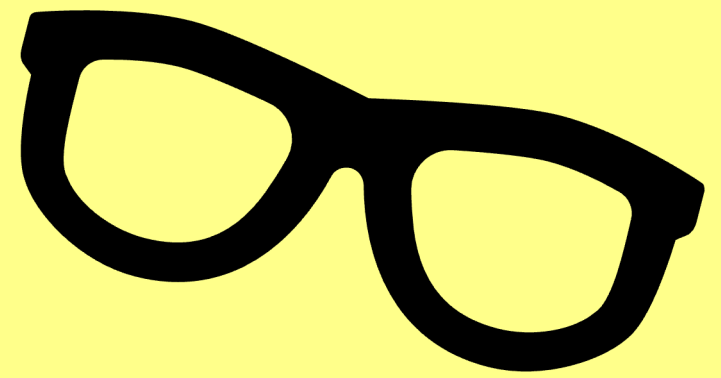
Many FA&F volunteers sign up for multiple assignments and shifts. Choose a different assignment for each day of the exhibit to enjoy the full experience of the event.

Details about the various volunteer assignments will be published in the April 15 edition of Council Connections and will include a link to the online sign-up sheet. Tickets for the special events will go on sale May 1.

Use this event to surround yourself with friends and flowers!! Volunteer for 2024 Fine Arts & Flowers to help make this year's event the best ever!!

- Alex McGrath and Birch Douglass -





Dues Renewal

Please be on the lookout for the dues renewal notices that will be sent out on April 1. Dues for Active members are \$75 and for Associate members \$100. You can easily renew online (there will be a link in the notice) or, if you prefer, you can renew by mail. Checks should be made out to The Council and mailed to:

The Council of the VMFA
200 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd.
Richmond, VA 23220

Please include “dues renewal” in the memo section on the check.

Complete instructions will also be in the renewal notice. Contact Deanna Maneker (deannamaneker@gmail.com) if you wish to change your membership status or if you have any other questions about your renewal. Thanks so much for renewing promptly.

- Deanna Maneker -

Online Learning for Council Members

The link to the video training lecture (2.26.24) on **VMFA Gallery Updates to the European and American Collections** given to the VMFA Tour Guides by Dr. Theresa Cunningham, Assistant Curator of European Art & the Mellon Collection; and Dr. Chris Oliver, Associate Curator of American Art has been added to the *Member Info* page under *Gallery Updates with VMFA Curators*.

*Please log in to Volgistics [here](#)
and enter your volunteer hours today!
Thank you!*

*If you have an article to include in the next issue of VMFA Council Connections, please contact Linda Gill (lagill@verizon.net) or Diane Barbour (dbarb9214@aol.com) by noon on **Wednesday, March 27, 2024.***