



**Freedom's  
Way** NATIONAL  
HERITAGE AREA

## **2025 Board of Directors**

### **Franca Barricelli, President**

Franca Barricelli serves as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and previously as founding Dean of Arts and Sciences, at Fitchburg State University, where she has been since 2017. In her current role, she provides leadership to advance the academic mission of the university, collaborating with administrators, faculty, and staff to coordinate academic policy, professional development for faculty and librarians, and curricular innovation and implementation. As dean, she collaborated with faculty to develop and deliver academic programs in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and interdisciplinary studies. She has also been actively involved in national initiatives related to general education reform, National Endowment for the Humanities program review, and the implementation of collaborative university/community public arts programs. Franca is professor emerita of history in the University of Wisconsin system, where she taught early modern European history and annual programs in Rome. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on Italian political culture and the arts.

### **Kara Fossey, Treasurer**

Kara Fossey has worked in the museum field since 2001 including internships at the Fitchburg Art Museum and Historic New England, collections assistant at the Townsend Historical Society, educator at the Higgins Armory Museum, and collections assistant and project registrar at Concord Art. Currently she serves as Executive Director of both the Groton History Center (Groton Historical Society) and the Fort Devens Museum where she manages museum operations as well as leads strategic growth.

Kara has been with the Groton History Center and Fort Devens Museum since 2007 and 2008, respectively. During her leadership she has seen both organizations through great growth in programming, collections preservation, archival accessibility, digital resources, historic restoration, facility expansion, rebranding, and community engagement and collaboration.

Kara received her undergraduate degree at Wheaton College (MA) and attended the Tufts University Museum Graduate Studies program with a focus on Collections Management and Exhibits. Within her work, Kara focuses on social history: how the lives and legacies of ordinary people shaped their communities in impactful ways. And through this storytelling, making connections by weaving a common thread through sometimes unlikely people, places, events, and time.

**Suzi Fonda, Clerk**

Suzi Fonda has worked in art and history museum education for more than 20 years. She is currently the Education Specialist at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston, where she directs all of the museum's programs for K-12 students and teachers. She also served as Director of Education and Public Programs at the Concord Museum in Concord, Massachusetts, overseeing the museum's programs for schools, teachers, adults, and families, as well as its visitor services and interpretation departments, and spent 10 years at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where she played a key role in the re-visioning and expansion of the museum's school and teacher programs. She has also been a member of the education departments at Plimoth Plantation, the Albany Institute of History & Art, and the Noah Webster House.

Suzi holds a Bachelor of Arts from Mount Holyoke College, a Master of Arts in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a Master of Arts in museum studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program. In 2014 she was named the Massachusetts Art Education Association's Museum Art Educator of the Year. She resides in Acton, Massachusetts with her husband Bill.

**Jane Becker**

Jane Becker directs the graduate public history track in the History Department at UMass Boston. She received her Ph.D. in American Studies from Boston University, and is the author of *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk, 1930-1940*. Before coming to UMass Boston in 2010, Jane worked in exhibition and program planning and as a historian for a wide range of museums and public humanities endeavors in New England—large and small history museums, both nationally and locally focused; state arts and humanities councils; local and federal historic sites and parks; universities; and local preservation commissions. From 2016 to 2019, she served as Massachusetts team leader for AASLH's Leadership in History Awards, rejuvenating her passion for supporting the history endeavors of local organizations and communities. Jane is a believer in and witness to the potential of history in transforming communities and empowering citizens, and an enthusiastic supporter of the public humanities.

**Heather Leavell**

Heather Leavell has served as the Director and Curator of the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum in Arlington, Massachusetts since 2014 and has been affiliated with the Museum for the past twenty years. Heather ensures that all Museum activities align with its institutional values, which are grounded in Cyrus Dallin's legacy as an artist, educator, and Indigenous rights advocate. She has overseen the reinterpretation of the Museum's Indigenous Peoples Gallery, restoration of the Museum's historic exterior, a strategic planning process, and the expansion of acquisitions, outreach, and fundraising.

Heather's professional experience also includes nine years as the Curator at the Peabody Historical Society and three years as the Curator of Education at The Robert Treat Paine Estate in Waltham.

### **Peter Lowitt**

The former Director/Land Use Administrator at the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC), Peter Lowitt is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners, immediate past-president of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association, past-chairman of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, and serves on the New Ecology Board of Directors. At DEC, he focused on the sustainable redevelopment of the 4,400-acre former army base which is regarded as the premier eco-industrial park in the United States. Prior to coming to Devens, Peter served as Director of Planning and Economic Development for the Town of Londonderry, New Hampshire where he developed the Londonderry Ecological Industrial Park and the award-winning Sustainable Londonderry Program.

Peter has a Bachelor of Arts in history from Brown University and a Master of Arts in Community Economic Development from the Urban Environmental Policy Graduate Program at Tufts University. Peter is excited to serve on the board of Freedom's Way as it combines his love of history with his knowledge of the region.

### **Sara Siskavich**

Sara Siskavich, GISP, is the GIS Manager at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) where she oversees NRPC's technology initiatives. Sara has worked in the GIS field since 2001 and has managed the NRPC GIS Program since 2012. Formerly, she was the Manager of GIS and CAD at Unifit Service Corp in Hampton, New Hampshire and has also held GIS positions in consulting and state government. Her professional interests include enterprise system implementations, database technology, systems security, and collaborative technologies to facilitate information sharing within and across organizations.

Sara earned a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, *magna cum laude*, and a Master of Arts in Geography, both from Boston University. She maintains professional GIS certification and is a member of the Geospatial Professional Network (formerly URISA). Sara holds a voting seat on the New Hampshire Statewide GIS Committee and enjoys volunteering as a member of the Amherst Heritage Commission.

### **Kisha Tracy**

Kisha G. Tracy is a Professor of English Studies, specializing in medieval British and world literatures, and the chair of the General Education Program Area at Fitchburg State University. She received her Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from the University of Connecticut.

Kisha has two books published, one entitled *Memory and Confession in Middle English Literature* and the second *Why Study the Middle Ages?*. Her primary research interests include the study of disabilities, particularly medieval mental health. In addition, Kisha focuses on

engaging student learning through the lens of cultural heritage, and she has an open access textbook called *Heritages of Change: Curatorial Activism and First-Year Writing* that was published by the Remixing Open Textbooks Through an Equity Lens project. One of Kisha's main hobbies is photography, particularly of heritage sites. To learn more, see her [professional portfolio here](#).