**International African American Museum  
Media Kit: Leadership Team Bios**

**Tonya M. Matthews, PhD**

**President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

**Dr. Tonya M. Matthews** is a thought-leader in institutionalized equity and inclusion frameworks, social entrepreneurship, and the intersectionality of formal and informal education. Her background as both poet and engineer have made her a highly sought-after visioning partner on boards and community building projects, as well as a frequent public speaker and presenter for communities across all ages and venues.

A non-profit executive leadership veteran, Dr. Matthews is currently president and CEO of the International African American Museum (IAAM), which is located in Charleston, S.C. at the historically sacred site of Gadsden’s Wharf, one of our nation’s most prolific former slave ports. IAAM is a champion of authentic, empathetic storytelling of American history and thus one of the nation’s newest platforms for the disruption of institutionalized racism as America continues the walk toward “a more perfect union.”

Dr. Matthews has a storied career in leadership. Most recently, she served as associate provost for Inclusive Workforce Development and as director of the STEM Innovation Learning Center for Wayne State University, and prior to that as the president and CEO of the Michigan Science Center – flexing her science and tech educational equity chops in both roles. Dr. Matthews credits her time at Wayne State University for a deeper understanding of the intersectionality of education, career, community agency, and self-efficacy, which she refers to as the “pre-K through Gray” pipeline. While at the Michigan Science Center, she founded *The STEMinista Project*, a movement to engage girls in their future with STEM careers and tools. She continues this work today through *STEMinista Rising*, supporting professional women in STEM – and the colleagues who champion them – with an inclusive emphasis on women of color.

Dr. Matthews’ dedication to community and her accomplishments are widely recognized. She was noted as one of the Most Influential Women in Charleston (*Charleston Business Magazine*, 2021) and honored as a “Trailblazer” by *Career Mastered Magazine* (2017). She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences Board on Science Education and was appointed by both Democratic and Republican administrations to the National Assessment Governing Board. Dr. Matthews is a published poet, included in *100 Best African American Poems* (2010), edited by Nikki Giovanni, and has written several articles and book chapters on inclusive governance, non-profit management, and fundraising.

Dr. Matthews received her Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from Johns Hopkins University and her B.S.E. in biomedical and electrical engineering from Duke University, alongside a certificate in African/African American Studies. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and The Links, Inc. Dr. Matthews is a native of Washington, D.C. and, in each community she has settled, is known for planting roots on the side of town best for keeping an eye on progress.

**John Anderson**

**Vice President of Administration and Chief Operating Officer (COO)**

Anderson joined the International African American Museum in 2021 as vice president and COO. In this role, he is responsible for activating the museum’s visitor experiences, building and site operations, organizational administration, and company culture. Prior to joining IAAM, Anderson served as the Michigan Science Center’s vice president of administration and chief operating officer. Prior to that, he held multiple professional positions with the City of Detroit and Detroit Zoological Society.

Anderson holds almost 30 years of experience as a leader in cultural attraction operations, organizational culture, and customer service.  In 2010, Anderson served as human resources committee member for the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), and he is currently an IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive. In 2015, he was recognized as a Patriotic Employer by the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense.  Anderson received a Bachelor of Science degree in zoology from Michigan State University.

**Dianne Firment**

**Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**

Firment joined the International African American Museum in 2019 as director of finance and was promoted to CFO in 2021. In this role she is responsible for propelling the financial growth and success of the museum’s operations.

Firment has more than 25 years of experience in the fields of finance, human resource management and leadership. Prior to joining the IAAM team, she served as the director of finance at the Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School in Worcester, Massachusetts. There, she directed all accounting and human resource functions of the school with over $20 million in revenues, over two hundred staff, and over fourteen hundred students. Firment received her Bachelor of Science degree in business administration with a focus on accounting, and she completed certificate coursework in human resource management at Assumption College.

**Malika N. Pryor**

**Chief Learning and Education Officer**

Malika N. Pryor, chief learning and engagement officer for the International African American Museum, provides strategic direction for creating and enhancing dynamic programs that explore the Middle Passage, the African diaspora, and the crucial contributions that African Americans have made to our history and to our modern world. As a member of the senior executive team, Pryor works closely with the CEO to establish partnerships and programs that support and sustain the museum’s mission, including exhibitions, school programs, faith-based initiatives and programs, local and national public programs, and the Center for Family History, a one-of-a-kind research center that focuses on African American genealogy.

A native of Detroit, Michigan, she was shaped by many of the city’s community and cultural arts institutions, and her education and work experience reflect this.

Pryor received her Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Studies and Afro-American and African Studies from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor before going on to earn her Juris Doctor degree from Wayne State University Law School in Detroit.

After practicing law in Atlanta for several years, Pryor returned to her hometown of Detroit in 2010, where she served as director of education and programs at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. From there, she started a boutique non-profit consulting firm providing services to emerging community-based organizations with a special emphasis on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) founders. She then joined the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas where she established the communications and education department. While living abroad, she founded the Curlyfest Bahamas Festival before once again returning to Detroit, where she most recently served as senior director of educations programs and outreach for the Detroit Historical Society. There, she formed a cohesive department, developing innovative experiences including *Invoking the Spirit: Detroit’s Black Bottom,* a digital exhibition and walking tour chronicling the lives and experiences of one of the most historically important neighborhoods in the city’s history.