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Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Announces Appointment of Patrick MacRae as the Doolittle Family Director of Gardens and Horticulture

Newly formed position endowed through \$800,000 gift from the Doolittle Family Foundation

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — March 10, 2022 — The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens announces the appointment of Patrick MacRae as the Doolittle Family Director of Gardens and Horticulture, a first-of-its-kind position endowed through a \$800,000 gift from the Doolittle Family Foundation.

MacRae previously served as the Director of Public Programs and Education of The Garden Conservancy located in Garrison, New York. He begins his new role at the Museum on March 28, 2022

“Patrick is a nationally regarded leader who brings a dynamic combination of talent, experience and enthusiasm to this role,” said Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, Ph.D., the Museum’s George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director and CEO. “He is a seasoned community builder, and I am confident that he will steward and lead the continued growth of one of the Museum’s most cherished assets.”

This announcement comes as the Museum continues to celebrate its 60th anniversary year. Throughout its history, the collections and gardens have served as the cornerstone of the Museum’s mission – to “engage and inspire through the arts, gardens, and education.”

MacRae served as the Director of Public Programs and Education of The Garden Conservancy from 2018 to 2021, and prior to that he was a Longwood Gardens Fellow, a leadership development program in the field of public horticulture located in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. From 2009 to 2017, he worked at the Cornell University Urban Horticulture Institute as a research manager. In his new role as the Doolittle Family Director of Gardens and Horticulture, MacRae will provide the strategic leadership and vision necessary to bring the historic Cummer Gardens to

their fullest potential and maintain their significance as horticultural gems. He will leverage his impressive background in living collections and public programming to activate the gardens in partnership with the Museum's educational and curatorial teams, increasing the connectivity between the art, gardens and educational components of the Museum's mission. This position was made possible through the support of the Doolittle Family and garden endowment donors.

"Patrick is an accomplished professional who will heighten the Cummer Museum's forward momentum," said Pam Paul, Chair of the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens' Board of Trustees. "Through his prior role as the Director of Public Programs and Education at The Garden Conservancy, he has the experience and professional networks to strengthen our efforts to be the bedrock of an art and garden district in Jacksonville."

The 2.5-acre Cummer Gardens are considered to be among the most precious works of art in the Museum's permanent collection. Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010, the Museum's Olmsted, English, and Italian gardens have a fascinating history stretching back more than 100 years. They bear the imprint of some of the foremost names in landscape design and horticulture including Ossian Cole Simonds, Ellen Biddle Shipman, Thomas Meehan and Sons and the fabled Olmsted Brothers firm. From 2018 through 2019, the gardens underwent an extensive restoration after they suffered substantial damage due to Hurricane Irma. The Museum engaged award-winning landscape and architecture firm WLA Studio as a consultant to lead the garden reconstruction. The involvement of these prestigious firms gives national importance to the Cummer Gardens.

In addition to its plantings and mature oak tree canopy, features such as reflecting pools, fountains, arbors, antique ornaments and sculptures help create a special outdoor space that provides a perfect complement to the Museum's art-based collections.

"I am energized by the opportunity to be joining the Cummer team at a tremendous inflection point—the mix of outstanding leadership, a compelling legacy, and a bold vision makes me believe that this organization is poised to fully realize its potential as a cultural catalyst for the city and beyond," said MacRae. "Public gardens are essential community assets—the gardens at the Cummer can help to ensure that the Museum is a wonderful and welcoming place for all. I am grateful for this opportunity to steward the gardens with respect for their history and with a focus on their vibrant future."

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About the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens:

For more than 60 years, the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens has been committed to engaging and inspiring through the arts, gardens, and education. A permanent collection of more than 5,000 objects and historic gardens on a riverfront campus offers nearly 140,000 annual visitors a truly unique experience on the First Coast. Nationally recognized education programs serve adults and children of all abilities. For further information, including hours, visit www.cummermuseum.org.