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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Eric Nelson Named Knight of the Polar Star by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden**

**Award Honors The Executive Director's Work at National Nordic Museum in Seattle**

SEATTLE, WA— Eric Nelson, Executive Director/CEO of the National Nordic Museum has received his second knighthood. His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden awarded Nelson the distinction of “Knight 1st Class of the Royal Order of the Polar Star” in recognition of his leadership in making the dream of a National Nordic Museum in Seattle, Washington, become a reality.

“This is a significant honor to receive on the behalf of the National Nordic Museum in Seattle,” said Nelson. “It is a testament to the international recognition of the Museum and its programs.”

In the letter informing Nelson and the Museum of the award, Karin Olofsdotter, Ambassador of Sweden to the United States, said that she looked forward to presenting the medal in person later this year. “You have in the most magnificent way succeeded in uniting the Nordic countries strengths and values at the National Nordic Museum through architecture, exhibitions, and programs. The National Nordic Museum is now a superior hub for public diplomacy in the USA and a central collaborative partner for the Embassy of Sweden as well as for all other Swedish-American organizations,” wrote Olofsdotter. “I am hoping the celebratory occasion when I can hand over your Royal Order of the Polar Star in person is getting closer. Until then, your medal is in safe keeping at the Embassy of Sweden in Washington, D.C.”

Since its grand opening in 2018, the Museum has received numerous awards including the designation of National Nordic Museum in 2019 by an Act of Congress. In 2020, Nelson accepted the American Alliance of Museums' Environmental Sustainability Award and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums' prestigious Buidly Award.

In 2018, Nelson was named Knight of the White Rose by President of Finland Sauli Niinistö. In 2019, Nelson was the recipient of the Swedish-American of the Year award from the Vasa Order of America. Last year, the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm honored him with the rarely awarded Hazelius Medal in Gold, the highest award given in Sweden for the preservation and promotion of Swedish cultural heritage.

### **More About The National Nordic Museum**

The National Nordic Museum is the only museum in the United States that showcases the impact and influence of Nordic values and innovation in contemporary society. The Museum tells the story of 12,000 years of Nordic history and culture, across all five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) as well as three semi-autonomous regions (Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Åland) and the cultural region of Sápmi. The Museum shares Nordic culture with people of all ages and backgrounds by exhibiting art and objects, preserving collections, providing educational and cultural experiences, and serving as a community gathering place.

### **More About The Polar Star**

The Royal Order of the Polar Star (Swedish: *Kungliga Nordstjärneorden*) is a Swedish order of chivalry created by King Frederick I in 1748, together with the Order of the Sword and the Order of the Seraphim.

Until 1975, the Order of the Polar Star was intended as a reward for Swedish and foreign "civic merits, for devotion to duty, for science, literary, learned and useful works and for new and beneficial institutions." After the reorganization of the orders in 1975 the order is now only awarded to foreigners and members of the royal family. It is often awarded to foreign office holders (such as prime and senior ministers) during Swedish state visits.

The motto on the blue enameled center of the badge is *Nescit Occasum*, a Latin phrase meaning "It knows no decline" This is to represent that Sweden is as constant as a never setting star.