



**National
Nordic
Museum**

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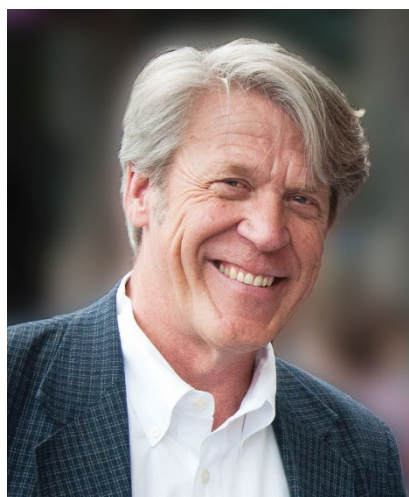
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**National Nordic Museum's Executive Director/CEO Eric Nelson Announces
Plans to Retire on July 1, 2024**

Nelson led the Museum's evolution from a beloved local institution to an iconic international destination with national designation by Congress.



(SEATTLE, WA) – After 16 years at the helm of the National Nordic Museum in Seattle, Eric Nelson announced today he will retire from his post July 1, 2024. Nelson has served as Executive Director/CEO since 2008.

Under Nelson’s leadership, the institution has evolved from a small community museum to an acclaimed international destination. The Museum, now housed in a \$55 million iconic structure, received a Congressional designation as the National Nordic Museum in 2019.

“Sir Eric” has been knighted by the King of Norway, the King of Sweden, and the President of Finland in honor of his efforts to create an American platform to explore and share Nordic culture, art, and values.

“It’s been an amazing ride and I’m so grateful for everyone who has helped advance this extraordinary institution that celebrates and shares Nordic culture,” said Nelson. “None of this would have been possible without our incredible staff, visionary community leaders, tireless volunteers, generous donors, international partners, Museum supporters, and so many others.”

“Eric has been the captain of our ship for 16 years, and he has guided us through a remarkable transformation into an institution that is both a regional treasure and a museum of national and international significance,” said Hans Aarhus, President of the Board of the National Nordic Museum. “We are eternally grateful for his excellent leadership, amazing work, and the lasting legacy he built for the community.”

“Eric has been a champion for all things Nordic,” said Petra Hilleberg, CEO of the Hilleberg Group and Honorary Consul of Sweden to Washington and Oregon. “He has played a key role in strengthening the cultural, economic, and social connections between the Nordic region and the Pacific Northwest, which will continue to benefit our communities for many years to come.”

The Museum’s Board of Trustees will conduct a national search for Nelson’s successor, with a goal of naming the new CEO and Executive Director in the late spring of 2024. Nelson will remain in his role until then to ensure a smooth transition.

ABOUT ERIC NELSON

Nelson’s inspiring and innovative work has resulted in numerous honors from the Nordic nations. Most recently, Nelson was named Knight First Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit conferred by King Harald V. Nelson is also the only non-Swedish citizen to receive the rarely awarded Hazelius Medal in Gold, Sweden’s highest recognition for the promotion of cultural heritage. Finland’s president, Sauli Niinistö, named him Knight of the Order of the White Rose of Finland; and he was awarded Knight 1st Class of the Royal Order of the Polar Star by His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden. In 2022, he was inducted into the Scandinavian-American Hall of Fame.

A graduate of the prestigious Getty Leadership Institute with a Master of Arts in History, Nelson, who has Swedish roots, has had a lifelong interest in his forebearers' stories. Speaking at a recent ceremony honoring Nelson, childhood friend and Museum supporter Martha Kongsgaard recalled him at 12-years-old coming to her classroom to talk about multi-culturalism and Nordic history. Young Nelson concluded the presentation presciently, saying, “One day in America, we will have to understand everyone’s perspective.”

ABOUT NATIONAL NORDIC MUSEUM

The National Nordic Museum collection includes 80,000 objects of cultural and historical significance of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, the cultural region of Sápmi, and Nordic immigrants to the United States. It hosts visiting exhibitions from the Nordic region with topics ranging from fine arts to Vikings to Nordic popular culture. The Museum serves as a convener on issues including innovation in the Nordic region and the United States, economic development, environmental policy, cultural identity, and societal issues. It presents more than 140 programs annually, including concerts, lectures, films, and educational events. In 2019, through an Act of Congress, and with the enthusiastic assistance of Senators Maria Cantwell and Lisa Murkowski, it was designated a National Museum.

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