



Eric Nelson, CEO of National Nordic Museum, Awarded Knighthood by President of Iceland

*The honor was presented by President Guðni Johannesson
at the presidential residence at Bessastaðir, Iceland.*

(Seattle, WA) 06.20.24 – On June 19, 2024, Eric Nelson, Executive Director/CEO, of the National Nordic Museum was awarded a knighthood in the Order of the Falcon by the President of Iceland, Guðni Johannesson. The knighthood honors Nelson’s efforts to create a platform to explore and share Nordic culture, art, and values, and for his longstanding work advancing Icelandic-American relations. The honor was presented by President Johannesson during a private ceremony at the presidential residence at Bessastaðir, Iceland.

“I am humbled by this amazing recognition from the President of Iceland. The honor is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of all the people that made the new National Nordic Museum a reality,” said Nelson. “This award celebrates the region’s Nordic community and close ties to Iceland.”

The Order of the Falcon is the only order of chivalry in Iceland, founded by King Christian X of Denmark and Iceland in 1921, and is the highest honor that the Icelandic state can bestow on individuals. Appointments are made on the nomination of the President of Iceland and that of a five-member council.

This award marks the fourth time that Nelson has received a knighthood from a Nordic Head of State. Nelson was previously named Knight First Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit by His Majesty King Harald V of Norway, Knight of the Order of the White Rose of Finland by the President Sauli Niinistö of Finland and was awarded Knight First Class of the Royal Order of the Polar Star by His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

Eric Nelson joined the National Nordic Museum as Executive Director/CEO in January 2008, where he has overseen the expansion of the Museum into a nationally and internationally recognized center for sharing Nordic culture, values, and innovation. He has been honored with the rarely awarded Hazelius Medal in Gold by Sweden’s Nordiska Museet, the only non-Swedish

citizen to receive the recognition. In 2022, he was inducted into the Scandinavian-American Hall of Fame.

Nelson is a graduate of the prestigious Getty Museum Leadership Institute and holds a Master of Art degree in History. He has served as a guest lecturer at the University of Washington, California State University, and Sacramento and San Francisco State University. A native of Napa, California, Nelson previously served as Executive Director of the Napa Valley Museum from 1999 to 2007. Prior to this role, he was Curator of Exhibits and Collections and then Executive Director of the Sonoma County Museum in Santa Rosa for eleven years.

Last year, Nelson announced his retirement from the Museum. To ensure a smooth transition, he agreed to remain in his role until the Museum's Board of Trustees finalizes their national search for a successor.

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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 and 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 autonomous regions (Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Åland) and the cultural region of Sápmi.

Awarded a national designation by an Act of Congress in 2019, the Museum shares Nordic culture with people of all ages and backgrounds through exhibitions, a collection of 80,000 objects, unique educational and cultural experiences, and by serving as a community gathering place.

For more information, visit: www.nordicmuseum.org.

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