



AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY NAMES SCIENTIST AND EDUCATOR SEAN M. DECATUR AS NEW PRESIDENT



NEW YORK, NY, December 6, 2022 — Scott L. Bok, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History, announced today that scientist and educator Sean M. Decatur has been named the next President of the Museum, assuming his duties on April 3, 2023. A biophysical chemist with a doctorate from Stanford University, Decatur has served with distinction since 2013 as President of Kenyon College. At the Museum, he will succeed Ellen V. Futter, who will step down in March 2023 after a 30-year tenure.

Scott L. Bok said, “The Board has enthusiastically confirmed the appointment of Sean M. Decatur to lead the American Museum of Natural History into its next era, ushered in by the opening of the Museum’s Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation in February 2023. With a proven record as an exceptionally inspiring and effective leader, he brings to the Museum the expertise in scientific research, passion for teaching and learning, and deep commitment to outreach and diversity that are central to the Museum’s mission. His

thoughtful leadership will benefit the Museum, the City of New York, and the entire museum community.”

Sean M. Decatur said, “I feel as if everything I’ve done in life has led up to the tremendous privilege, responsibility, and opportunity of heading the American Museum of Natural History. This great institution, which already has achieved so much during Ellen Futter’s presidency, is ready to take on the next crucial challenges in everything from scientific research to supporting public education, and to expanding access. I look forward eagerly to working with the Board, the outstanding staff, and the people of New York in realizing the unparalleled promise of this Museum.”

ABOUT SEAN M. DECATUR

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Sean Decatur earned his bachelor’s degree from Swarthmore College and in 1995 was awarded his doctorate in biophysical chemistry from Stanford University. From 1995 to 2008, he was an assistant and associate professor of chemistry at Mount Holyoke College, where he helped establish a top research program in biophysical chemistry. He was a visiting scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 2004 to 2005 and then served from 2008 to 2013 as a professor of chemistry and biochemistry and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Oberlin College. He has won research grants from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health and from private foundations including the Alzheimer’s Association and the Dreyfus Foundation and is the author of numerous scholarly articles. He was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2017 and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2019.

After being named President of Kenyon College in 2013, Sean Decatur became a leading voice in the national conversation about higher education. Under his leadership, Kenyon joined the American Talent Initiative, a coalition of colleges working to expand access and opportunity, and inaugurated the Kenyon Access Initiative to increase diversity and foster inclusion, as a result of which Kenyon has attracted the most diverse and academically talented incoming classes in its history. While serving as President, Decatur also continued to teach courses, including seminars in biochemistry, and developed Kenyon’s natural sciences division, enabling the college to provide students with experiences rivaling those at major research universities.

Sean Decatur, who will be the Museum’s first African American President, is married to Renee Romano, the Robert S. Danforth Professor of History and Professor of Comparative American Studies and Africana Studies at Oberlin College. They have two adult children, Sabine and Owen.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869, is one of the world’s preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses more than 40 permanent exhibition halls and galleries for temporary exhibitions, the Rose Center for Earth and Space and the Hayden Planetarium, and the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation, which opens February 2023. The Museum’s scientists draw on a world-class permanent collection of more than 34 million specimens and artifacts, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its

Richard Gilder Graduate School, the Museum grants the Ph.D. degree in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree, the only such freestanding, degree-granting programs at any museum in the United States. The Museum's website, digital videos, and apps for mobile devices bring its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions around the world. Visit amnh.org for more information.

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