

Résumé: Carmen Foster, VMFA Community Affairs Director

As VMFA's Community Affairs Director, Carmen Foster designs, implements, monitors and evaluates programs to cultivate new and previously underrepresented constituents for VMFA and to expand the Museum's customer base. She represents VMFA for community outreach initiatives through events, presentations and service on boards and committees to ensure VMFA's community presence and visibility. She also serves as staff liaison for VMFA's Multicultural Advisory Committee and VMFA's Friends for African and African American Art. She advocates for diversity in overall museum programming, and supervises staff of membership support groups.

A Richmond native, Foster brings extensive experience to VMFA through her professional roles in higher education, public administration and community service. She has served as Director of the Master's Program in Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Executive Director of the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University, and as Executive Director to design graduate studies at the University of Richmond's Jepson School of Leadership Studies. She has served as Executive Assistant to two Mayors, Vice President of Public Affairs for the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce, and as an Assistant to the City Manager. She has significant nonprofit board experience with arts, historic preservation and community-based initiatives since 1983. She is a co-founder of the VMFA's Friends of Art.

Currently, she serves on the boards of the Library of Virginia Foundation, the Commonwealth Girl Scout Council, the Friends of the VCU Libraries and the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities.

Foster holds a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University and completed Harvard's program for senior executives in state and local government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. Additionally, she has a master's degree in communication from Clarion University and a bachelor's degree in mass communications from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has also studied at the doctoral level at the University of Massachusetts and the University of Virginia.

Foster has received special recognition for her contributions and service. In 2005 she received the Alumni Service Award at the first annual Black Policy conference at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. In 2004 the Richmond YWCA presented her with the Outstanding Woman in Education award. In 1994 the W. K. Kellogg Foundation selected her as a Kellogg National Leadership Fellow and awarded her a three year fellowship grant for leadership development. She traveled extensively in Ghana, South Africa, Brazil, China and the U.S. west coast to learn more about leadership, wellness, spirituality and healing for women and communities of color. In 1990 she received the AT&T Fellowship and Women's Leadership Fellowship grants for graduate study in public administration at Harvard and was named as an Administrative Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government in 1991. She has also served the Commonwealth of Virginia as a board member to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and the Virginia Council on the Status of Women.