

Iowa Museum Association Leadership Award 2021 David A. Janssen

The Iowa Museum Association Leadership Award is intended to recognize outstanding contributions to the museum field through visionary leadership. Candidates should be employed (or formerly employed) in a top leadership role in a museum and must show how their leadership has impacted Iowa museums.



David A. Janssen is a seventh-generation Iowan with 29 years of experience in museum and historic site leadership. Before assuming his role as Executive Director at Brucemore in January of 2012, he served as Vice President of Collections and Interpretation at the Detroit Historical Society, Vice President of Internal Operations at Edsel & Eleanor Ford House in Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan, and as Curator of the Smith-McDowell House Museum in Asheville, North Carolina. He also served as Assistant Director of Brucemore from 1993 until 2001.

David earned a bachelor's degree in history from Dartmouth College; a master's in history from Duquesne University with a certificate in museums, archives, and historical editing; and an M.B.A. from the University of Iowa. He is also a 2008 graduate of the Seminar for Historical Administration.

David has participated in numerous notable professional organizations in leadership and support roles including the American Association for State and Local History; the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation; Friends of Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation; Iowa Cultural Corridor Alliance; National Trust for Historic Preservation's seminal "Historic Site Stewardship in the 21st Century forum"; Institute of Museum and Library Services; and National Endowment for the Humanities. David also serves the museum community by sharing his expertise at local, state, and national conferences and events.

David Janssen led Brucemore, a property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation run by an Iowa-based non-profit organization, through a transformative period to re-align its sustainability model. At his start as Executive Director, he identified fatal flaws in the decades-old business model and crafted a vision for change. This included reviewing programs and outputs, projecting expenses related to preservation and maintenance of the site's resources, and analyzing revenue streams. At the same time, he began an informational campaign to educate stakeholders, establish the organization's first development function, and lead its first capital campaign. Throughout, he consistently solicited and used data gleaned from community and visitor surveys, as well as museum peers and non-profit partners, to ensure that the organization's impact made Eastern Iowa a better place to live, work, and play.

Since 2012, David has raised over \$10 million for preservation and infrastructure improvements at Brucemore, increasing the organizational budget by 90%. A major part of this work has been an ambitious \$4.5 million preservation project to restore the mansion, known as the Mansion Envelope Restoration Project. This project involved extensive collaboration and fund development at the local and state level, as well as project management to ensure each window, door, brick, and slate element was preserved at the highest national standards. The project has been used as a case study for other Iowa museums through presentations at several regional and national conferences to identify the complexities in raising funds, gaining community support, and completing historic preservation. The project has also won several awards, including Preservation Iowa's "Best Community Effort" award in 2020 and the Award for Stewardship by an Organization by Friends of Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation in 2019.

Under David's leadership, Brucemore partners with a wide variety of nonprofit organizations to share the risk and reward of programming, audiences, and impact. These partnerships bring together nonprofit staff to start conversations, share information, and learn from each other. - Tara Richards, Director of Community Engagement, and Katie Benedix, Development Manager

Celebrating David's receipt of the 2019 Nonprofit Leadership Excellence Award from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, the Community Foundation said, "Under David's leadership, Brucemore has continued to be a valued collaborator in the arts community, working in partnership with organizations like SPT Theatre, Orchestra Iowa, and Playtime Poppy. Hundreds of independent artists and performers are able to connect with audiences through self-produced events like Cabaret in the Courtyard, and Brucemore has received six awards from the Iowa Cultural Corridor Association for collaboration."



In 2019 David led the creation of a new arts opportunity at Brucemore: The Artisan Studio. The Artisan Studio fosters and cultivates local talent through the site's Artisan in Residence program. A group of gifted artists, working with local music production company GMix East, write, develop, produce, record, and mix original work in a studio located within the historic, early 20th century Servant's Duplex.

Cynthia Sweet, Director of the Iowa Museum Association said, "The Iowa Museum Association Leadership Award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the museum field. David's contributions to the field have been diverse and exceptional. Perhaps most significantly, his leadership at Brucemore provides a model, reminding leaders to review their organization's sustainability model and make informed changes as needed for the long-term benefit of their institution."