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**For Immediate Release****Salisbury House Foundation Names New Executive Director**

*Keshia Meissner joins Salisbury House and Gardens June 1st, 2020*

**Des Moines, Iowa (April 28, 2020)** - Salisbury House Foundation announced today it has named Keshia Meissner as its new executive director for Salisbury House and Gardens. Meissner will assume her role with the Salisbury House on June 1st.

Meissner brings nearly twelve years of non-profit experience to Salisbury House and Gardens, including the last nine years as executive director of Beacon of Life in Des Moines. During this time, she led a team to develop policies and programs to further the Beacon of Life mission and was responsible for fundraising through events, grants and individual philanthropy. In addition to her fundraising and donor relations efforts, Meissner kicked off the organization's first ever capital campaign. Prior to her role as executive director of Beacon of Life, Meissner worked as the program development director at the Domestic/Sexual Assault Outreach Center in Fort Dodge, Iowa, overseeing grant writing, marketing efforts, donor relations and volunteer policies and procedures.

"Keshia has had incredible success as a non-profit leader within greater Des Moines, and we are excited to have her join our team to further our engagement with the community," said Cheryl Critelli, the incoming president of the Salisbury House Foundation board of directors. "Her development experience and leadership skills will be instrumental in creating the strategic growth needed to enhance our presence as a vibrant arts and culture resource within Des Moines."

Built in the 1920's, Salisbury House and Gardens is one of the last standing historic house museums open to the public. The house contains over 10,000 pieces of fine art, antique furniture, musical instruments and antiques from across the world and provides a unique setting for both fundraising events and private rentals. Salisbury House Foundation is a non-profit committed to maintaining the integrity of Salisbury House and Gardens by preserving the historical structure of the home and connecting guests with arts and cultural programming.

"I'm honored to be joining Salisbury House and Gardens as their new executive director," said Meissner. "I have attended several events at Salisbury House, each giving me a unique, one-of-a-kind experience. Salisbury House is a cornerstone for art, culture, and history in Des Moines. Arts and culture are vital to a city's civic and social engagement and I look forward to ensuring Salisbury House is available as a resource to future generations."

Meissner is an Iowa native and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. She was recognized as a Des Moines Forty Under 40 and Inspiring Women of Iowa Finalist in 2018. Meissner is the current president of the Rotary Club of Greater Des Moines and previous board president of the Des Moines Downtown Chamber of Commerce. She is a graduate of the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute Community Connect Program in 2015 and Community Leadership Program in 2017. Meissner continues to connect with her community and organizations through public speaking and committee opportunities.

### **About Salisbury House**

Salisbury House & Gardens is a private, non-profit organization governed by the Salisbury House Foundation. Located in the Salisbury Oaks Neighborhood in the heart of Des Moines, Salisbury House & Gardens is a historic house museum that is open to the public and welcomes thousands of guests each year for its cultural, historical, educational and social events. Completed in 1928, Carl and Edith Weeks modeled their country estate after the King's House in Salisbury, England. The 42-room English manor house is filled with valuable collections from the Weeks family estate, including furniture, paintings, sculptures, and textiles.

Cheryl Critelli, the newly appointed chairman and president of the Salisbury House Foundation board of directors will be replacing Andrea Westmeyer. Westmeyer held the position as board president since 2016. Critelli has been a member of the board since 2017. Additional changes in Salisbury House Foundation officers include Bill Havekost appointed as vice president of the board of directors. Havekost joined the board in September 2019. For a full list of Salisbury House Foundation board of directors visit [www.salisburyhouse.org/board](http://www.salisburyhouse.org/board).

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