POSITION PROFILE

Executive Director
Frank Lloyd Wright’s Martin House
Buffalo, NY
ABOUT FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT’S MARTIN HOUSE

The crown jewel and “opus” of the Frank Lloyd Wright prairie collection, the Martin House is a compelling symbol of architectural excellence, civic identity, cultural pride and sustainability. Nestled in a historic neighborhood in a city with a rich arts and cultural community, the Martin House is often referred to as “the finest restored Wright site in the U.S.”

Considered one of the most important works of the famed architect’s career, the Martin House has achieved international prominence. It has ambitious goals that will impact and benefit all citizens of the city of Buffalo, the region and beyond.

Mission
To preserve, interpret, promote and sustain an integrated composition of world-class architecture, design and landscape.

Vision
To be a dynamic and celebrated masterpiece of innovative architecture inspiring and attracting visitors with the power of design in harmony with nature.
History

Built between 1903 and 1905, the Martin House was designed as the city home for Buffalo business executive Darwin D. Martin and his family.

The 1.5-acre Martin House estate consists of six contiguous buildings, extensive art glass, furnishings, decorative elements and an integrated landscape which was conceived by Wright as a unified composition.

The Martin House has an extensive history, during which it was abandoned, partially demolished and neglected in the period following the Martins’ life there.
Restoration & Operations

With the resolve of many, in 1992 an ambitious restoration effort to save this treasure began in earnest. 2019 marked the completion of the 25-year, $52 million restoration effort – one of the most comprehensive and extensive restorations of a Frank Lloyd Wright property anywhere.

Today, the Martin House stands as a National Historic Landmark and the flagship museum in the network of New York State Historic Sites. It is operated through a Joint Cooperative Agreement between the Martin House, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the State University of New York at Buffalo.

In addition to a talented staff, there are more than 300 dedicated volunteers who help run the site – leading tours, supporting educational programming, caring for collections, working in the museum store and maintaining the gardens.

The Impact of COVID-19

As was the case for so many institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges for the Martin House. The museum persevered and quickly adapted in creative and valuable ways. It provided programming that was both innovative and responsive to the needs of the audiences and the times, mostly by turning to virtual experiences and increased digital opportunities. In addition, the Martin House was effective and resourceful in securing significant public pandemic relief funds, as well as having PPP loans forgiven, resulting in a stable financial position despite a significant drop in earned revenue.
Looking Ahead

With the restoration complete and an eye toward the return of travel and in-person experiences, the Martin House is poised for an exciting and explosive next chapter of impact.

In this next phase, the goal of the Martin House is to provide innovative and breakthrough programs and experiences that advance the Martin House’s mission and vision in powerful new ways resulting in access and inspiration for visitors from all walks of life and from locations far and wide.

In addition, building on its stellar reputation and consistent success as TripAdvisor’s number-one tourist attraction in Buffalo, the Martin House is widely recognized as a pivotal component of the cultural tourism segment of the regional economy and is positioned to serve as a key catalyst for economic development for the region.

LEARN MORE:
Visit martinhouse.org
To take a virtual tour click here
ABOUT THE GREATER BUFFALO NIAGARA REGION

Located on the eastern tip of Lake Erie with close proximity to Niagara Falls and Ontario, Canada, Buffalo is the hidden gem of New York state.

Often touted as a “big, small city,” Buffalo is experiencing a renaissance, with significant growth and development. Despite its Northeast location, Buffalo is described as a Midwestern city with family-friendly values and a close-knit community feel.

Also known as “the City of Good Neighbors,” Buffalo has a history of welcoming immigrant and migrant communities since the 1800s. This is reflected in the vibrant cultural richness and diversity of the community.

With 1.1 million people residing in the Buffalo-Niagara region, the city provides all the attractions of a much larger metropolitan area. Given its location on Lake Erie, proximity to Western New York’s outdoor scene and a reinvigorated waterfront, there are countless opportunities to explore the great outdoors and stay active. The city itself boasts vibrant art centers, restored architectural treasures, a noteworthy food scene, countless historical and cultural attractions, entertainment, live music, flourishing and distinct neighborhoods, family-friendly attractions, outdoor recreation and thriving professional sports teams.

Many of the architectural greats left their mark on Buffalo – Wright, Sullivan, Richardson, Olmsted and beyond. There are few cities more abundant in architectural richness and significance than Buffalo. Once one of the country’s most bustling and prosperous industrial hubs, the Queen City’s twentieth century boom period drew the attention of not only of powerful business magnates, but some of the era’s most distinguished and venerated design talents.

See more about the renaissance of the Greater Buffalo Niagara region and the Martin House’s role, here.

To discover more about the Buffalo Niagara Region, visit visitbuffaloniagara.com.
THE OPPORTUNITY

In 2022, the Martin House will welcome its next leader as part of a planned succession for current Executive Director Mary Roberts, who has led the Martin House for 16 years.

A moment of extraordinary transition for the Martin House, the Executive Director role is a rare opportunity to take the helm of one of the most iconic pieces of American architecture and steer it into the next phase of its storied history.

Under current leadership, the Martin House has successfully established a wealth of staff, volunteer talent and partnerships, and is in solid financial standing. Serving as only the third Executive Director in the Martin House’s history, this leader will have the opportunity to build on this durable foundation, while simultaneously leading the charge of reimagining what the Martin House can be and accomplish.

Reporting directly to the Board, the Executive Director will lead overall strategic, operational, financial and managerial responsibility for the Martin House.

Key responsibilities of the Executive Director include, among others:

**STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP**

- Serve as a creative thought leader providing innovative guidance to grow and guide the Martin House’s relevance and impact in its next chapter.
- Ensure the positioning of the Martin House as a leading cultural organization and world-class destination.
- Lead the Board and staff in identifying and implementing strategic initiatives that expand the Martin House’s capacity to serve the community.
- Facilitate ongoing conversations and develop organizational steps toward a continued commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and access.
- Partner and work collaboratively with heads of regional cultural institutions, in particular regarding an ongoing “inclusive cultural initiative” working individually and collectively to develop multi-year DEI planning related to governance, staffing and programs.
- Thoughtfully expand the Martin House’s reach by embracing technology to go beyond its walls.
- Elevate annual visitation (physical and virtual) to an audience of 50,000+ on an annual basis and expand revenue generation in a corresponding manner.
OPERATIONS LEADERSHIP

• Provide ultimate leadership for all aspects of operations of a complex institution, including financial oversight of an approximately $3 million annual operating budget (plus financial components associated with NYS partner organizations), oversight of a staff of 27, facilities, collections, management, programming, education, development and volunteers.

• Oversee continuous preservation and maintenance of the multiple historic structures associated with the Martin House estate and the ongoing maintenance of multiple non-historic structures including a state-of-the-art visitor center.

• Ensure that long-range plans are in place and that institutional resources are efficiently deployed to meet the Martin House’s mission.

• Work with staff to ensure the quality, scope and suitability of tour and education programs that reflect the programmatic focus of the Martin House.

• Manage the Joint Cooperative Agreement between the Martin House, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the State University of New York at Buffalo.

FUNDRAISING & REVENUE GENERATION:

• Serve as the leading voice and external face of the Martin House.

• Cultivate long-term relationships to ensure the financial and programmatic viability of the Martin House.

• In partnership with Board leadership, ensure successful fundraising from individuals, corporations, foundations and government.

• Expand and develop fundraising opportunities through new and ongoing strategic partnerships.

• Cultivate new sources of revenue by creatively and strategically expanding and deepening the existing visitor and donor base.

BOARD RELATIONS:

• Facilitate governance best practices through effective communication and collaboration with the Board. Serve as primary liaison to support the work of board committees.

• Ensure continued development of the Board of Directors by identifying and cultivating new and existing members, in particular by advancing a DEI focus for prospective directors.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will have the following professional and personal qualities, skills and characteristics:

**A Creative & Strategic Thinker**

The Executive Director will:

- Be a creative “big picture thinker,” energized by the opportunity to step into an iconic institution at a pivot point, with the natural ability to evolve and elevate an organization.
- Instinctively identify opportunities and challenges and establish bold yet realistic strategies that are consistent with the ideals and objectives of the Martin House.
- Embrace the opportunity to reconceptualize the role those cultural institutions play in a community and be energized by innovative ideas and new pathways for community impact.
- Have an entrepreneurial spirit with a track-record of fostering successful innovation and achieving ambitious goals.

**An Exceptional Relationship Builder & Community Collaborator**

The Executive Director will:

- Be a socially aware leader with high integrity and emotional intelligence who can naturally build authentic relationships with a breadth of constituents including staff, volunteers, the Board of Directors, New York State Parks, the State University of New York at Buffalo, elected officials at all levels, major donors, community members and other allies.
- Bring great energy, vision and ability to speak learnedly about the Martin House’s history, impact, growth strategy and future direction with the ability to inspire others and coalesce the community and beyond around the value of the space.
- Embrace and thrive in the interpersonal aspects of the role, serving both as an externally adept ambassador and internally focused leader who can effectively balance the needs of various constituents.
- Be an excellent communicator and listener, with the ability to foster an atmosphere of collaboration, partnership and trust.
- Excel at building transparent, productive and cohesive teams where innovative ideas are welcomed and valued at all levels.
A Strong Ambassador & Fundraiser

The Executive Director will:

• Be able to enthusiastically convey the importance of the Martin House’s work to existing and potential new funding sources including foundations, major donors and public agencies.

• Bring a creative approach to further diversify funding streams and earned revenue, with an understanding of visitor experience, program income and major gift and the Martin House Endowment fundraising.

• Proactively seek out opportunities to increase the Martin House’s reputation locally, regionally and beyond in the multiple arenas of architecture, design, historic preservation and the Frank Lloyd Wright community.

• Enjoy and excel at the external aspects of the role by serving as the “face” of and primary ambassador for the Martin House.
An Effective Leader

The Executive Director will:

- Be a natural leader with the ability to inspire and empower a talented team and volunteer base, designing effective workflows and supporting the professional growth and development of others.
- Be inherently resourceful and collaborative, with a “roll up your sleeves” mentality and a willingness to “wear many hats.”
- Have a diverse set of leadership skills and the humility and willingness to leverage others’ expertise when needed.
- Have the ability to serve as a key leader, influencer and change-maker in a community going through a major renaissance.

A Champion for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access

The Executive Director will:

- Be community focused, with a strong commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, access and sustainability with a deep belief in founding board member John Courtin’s statement, “It’s everyone’s Martin House.”
- Be culturally competent and dedicated to listening, learning and amplifying the voices of all.
- Actively engage in strategies that invite community input and expand the range of voices and perspective shaping the future of the Martin House.
- Collaborate with internal and external partners to extend the impact of the Martin House’s programming to broader audiences.

A Passion for the Mission & the Western New York Region

The Executive Director will:

- Bring an authentic passion for the Martin House’s mission and vision, along with a belief in its future and impact.
- Have a sincere belief in the power of educating and connecting the community through firsthand learning and other experiences.
- Be passionate about cementing the Martin House as a clear leader among cultural institutions locally, regionally and beyond.
- Be an empathetic leader, focused on deeply understanding the Martin House constituents and audiences.
- Inspire others because they are inspired by the work itself.

The Martin House is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages expressions of interest from people of color, individuals living with disabilities, women and LGBTQ+ leaders.
IDEAS STATEMENT

Darwin and Isabelle Martin, along with Frank Lloyd Wright, believed in the democracy of architecture and nature, and the powerful force for good that comes from the sharing of diverse perspectives and viewpoints.

Wright’s focus on breaking convention and creating spaces for all types of individuals perfectly aligned with the Martins’ philanthropic endeavors and community-driven lifestyle.

At the Martin House, we strive to embody these same IDEAS: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Sustainability. We endeavor to infuse these ideals into the foundations of the Martin House, and we are committed to these principles so as to build a stronger museum for the benefit of all citizens of the city of Buffalo, the region and beyond.

**Inclusion**: We aspire to create a culture of belonging where differences are welcomed, diverse perspectives are valued, and every voice is heard in an environment built on respect and inclusion.

**Diversity**: We strive to expand representation of all our varied identities by affirming our similarities and asserting the value in our differences.

**Equity**: We champion fair treatment, equality of opportunity and parity in access for all.

**Accessibility**: We seek to make our programs, resources and facilities accessible by removing barriers and providing opportunities for meaningful engagement.

**Sustainability**: Led by the spirit of Frank Lloyd Wright, we promote optimal practices and policies that aim to keep our grounds—as well as our planet—both livable and beautiful as stewards of the natural and built environment.
Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Cheryl Stevens, Michele Ybarra, Rebeca Hernandez and Alison Ranney are leading this search. To make recommendations or to express interest in this role please email martinhouse@koyapartners.com. All nominations, inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

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