

DUMBARTON OAKS

RESEARCH LIBRARY AND COLLECTION

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Jonathan Kavalier Named Dumbarton Oaks Director of Gardens and Grounds

WASHINGTON – Dumbarton Oaks has hired Jonathan Kavalier to succeed Gail Griffin as the Director of Gardens and Grounds. Her successor brings with him more than 15 years of experience in landscape design and public garden management. Since 2015, Kavalier has served the Architect of the Capitol, as Management and Program Analyst and Acting Deputy Superintendent. During this time, he led the development and finalization of first five-year strategic plan and associated one-year business plan for the Capitol Grounds. Kavalier was previously Supervisory Horticulturist at the Smithsonian Gardens (2010 – 2015) and Horticulturist at the Smithsonian Gardens (2006 – 2010).

“Jonathan joins strong horticultural knowledge and a deep commitment to historic preservation with enthusiasm about the role of public gardens and a passion for education and outreach,” says Jan Ziolkowski, Director of Dumbarton Oaks. “Under Gail Griffin’s much-valued leadership over the past two decades, the garden has remained as beautiful and true to Farrand’s design as ever, while also evolving to adapt to changing conditions and encompass temporary installations of new art. I have every confidence that Jonathan will maintain and build on this excellent record.”

At Dumbarton Oaks, Kavalier will be responsible for managing and overseeing the care of the historic property, including a ten-acre garden of international significance for which the initial design was developed in the 1920s by Beatrix Farrand in collaboration with Mildred Bliss. He will also participate in scholarly programming and projects related to the Dumbarton Oaks Garden and support the implementation of temporary art installations in the garden.

ABOUT DUMBARTON OAKS

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection is the legacy of Robert and Mildred Woods Bliss, collectors and patrons of art and scholarship in the humanities. The multiple aspects of the Blisses’ gift include the historic garden and buildings, world-class collections for researchers and the public to enjoy, and generous support for fellowships and scholarly endeavors on the local, national, and international levels. Dumbarton Oaks is a research institute of Harvard University that exists to further and publish research in the three areas of study: Byzantine Studies, Pre-Columbian Studies, and Garden and Landscape Studies. Residential fellowships for an academic year, semester, or summer are awarded in all three areas of study to scholars from around the world. In addition, Dumbarton Oaks offers one-month non-residential awards to researchers, and short-term pre-doctoral residencies to advanced graduate students. Each of the three programs of study supports and disseminates research in its relevant

fields through an annual symposium; a program of public lectures, informal talks, and colloquia; and publications. The Dumbarton Oaks Museum contains the Byzantine Collection, one of the finest collections of artifacts from the Byzantine Empire with more than twelve hundred objects from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. The Robert Woods Bliss Collection of Pre-Columbian Art is housed in the Pre-Columbian Pavilion, designed by architect Philip Johnson. This collection comprises objects from the ancient cultures of Mesoamerica, the Intermediate Area, and the Andes. The House Collection consists primarily of the historic interiors, Asian, European and American artworks, and interior furnishings. The ten-acre formal garden surrounds the 1801 Federal-style house. Mildred Barnes Bliss worked closely with renowned landscape designer Beatrix Farrand to transform the land surrounding the house into terraces and vistas. The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library has extensive holdings in our three dedicated areas of study and the Rare Book Collection is strong on works of landscape architecture, botany, and horticulture, while also reflecting the research focus of Dumbarton Oaks. The Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives (ICFA) documents and preserves material from fieldwork and the Dumbarton Oaks Archives inventories, conserves, stores, and makes accessible the institute's past, current, and future records and artifacts.
