



Ballots were distributed by email to members on November 4. Please contact ncph@iu.edu if you are a member and did not receive a ballot.

Information on current members of the NCPH Board of Directors is available at <https://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Board-Bios.pdf>

2026 Election – Candidate Statements

Vice-President/President-Elect

(You may vote for up to one (1) individual. This position serves two years as vice-president, two years as president, and two years as past president on the Board of Directors.)

Priya Chhaya

National Trust for Historic Preservation



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

It's tough to choose just one of NCPH's values to focus on because they are designed to reinforce and build off of one another, and I am committed to leading not only with integrity, but also with those ethical considerations in mind. However, if I just had to pick one, it would be our value around community co-creation which really encapsulates the responsibility we bear in engaging with the public in all its varied forms.

What's your short bio?

I have been a practicing public historian for over 19 years and bring with me a BA in History (and a minor in Anthropology) from the College of William and Mary and a MA in History, Concentrating in Public History from American University. For most of my career I have worked as a content creator at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and am now the Associate Director of Content.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

Today I work as one of the lead storytellers for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where I highlight not only the activities of the organization but also share histories and present day stories of the many communities that we support. On any day I could be developing content around legacy businesses, a modern historic house museum, one of the Chinatowns that are in the United States, diving deep into storytelling and advocacy around Route 66, or running a webinar on AI in Preservation. I love the people who are a part of our community and believe strongly in our mission.

What's your NCPH origin story?

My NCPH origin story is quite simple. Right after graduate school I presented at the NCPH conference in Santa Fe. I didn't know very many people and was sitting in the lobby of La Fonda to

get off my feet when two long-time NCPH members struck up a conversation. The next thing I know I was on the program committee for the next conference. It is from this simple welcoming act of kindness and inclusion that my love for this organization is rooted.

What has your involvement been with NCPH?

If we had to encapsulate my involvement with NCPH in a sentence it would be this: You name it, I've done it. Over the years I have been honored to serve NCPH in a lot of different ways. In addition to being a member of several standing committees and task forces, I have served on conference program committees as both a member and as a chair (Las Vegas 2018!), was elected to the nominating committee (which I also subsequently chaired), co-led with the amazing Will Stoutamire the membership piece of our last Endowment campaign, and more recently completed my term on the NCPH Board in 2024 where I also sat and eventually chaired the Governance Committee—bringing home years of incredible work by others to have our new statement of values adopted.

Why should other people care about public history?

I've been thinking about this question for a few weeks and it comes down to this. Without a clear understanding of the past we are lost, and public historians, however you define yourselves, are equipped to meet the moment. We are teachers, preservationists, archivists, librarians, museum professionals, or oral historians. We are community organizers hosting a genealogy workshop, citizens documenting signage at national institutions or our National Parks, and we are children and grandchildren who are taking a moment to interview an elder about their life experience. NCPH has a big tent, and all are welcome, because it is only collectively that we can make sure that the full story is told for years to come.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

I read a lot and one of my favorite books of all time is *Tigana* by Guy Gavriel Kay which is about a country who through a magician's curse loses both their memory and the name of their homeland. It's a book I have been thinking about lately as I contemplate writing my own novel, something I have wanted to do since I wrote a short story for the American Historical Association in 2021.

<https://www.historians.org/perspectives-article/the-dinner-party-perspectives-first-piece-of-fiction-december-2021/>

Treasurer

(You may vote for up to **one (1)** individual. The Treasurer is elected triennially, and, beginning with the 2026 election, will serve as Treasurer-elect a year prior to the expiration of the incumbent's three-year term.)

Amy H. Wilson

Independent Consultant



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

As a long-standing member of the finance committee, I am committed to NCPH's goal to be financially independent. As treasurer I will work to further a culture of philanthropy among NCPH members and donors to provide financial resources to serve the critical needs of NCPH's mission and support public history practitioners.

What's your short bio?

Throughout my public history career, I've worked in various museum settings, including museums in Indianapolis, IN, Curator and Director of an AAM-accredited museum in upstate New York, and a guest-curator for institutions in Missouri and my hometown of Atlanta, Georgia. For the past 15 years, I have been a museum consultant and editor of two editions of the *Encyclopedia of Local History* for AASLH.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I am working on two independent research projects including a history of a now-defunct theatre in upstate New York, which plays to my interest in the history of popular culture. The second project is about an iron foundry started by my great-grandfather in 1919, which focuses not only on family history, but also industrial and labor history in my hometown.

What's your NCPH origin story?

I served as the NCPH Graduate Intern under then-Executive Director Elizabeth B. Monroe during my first year in the public history MA program at IUPUI (now IU-Indianapolis). It was a great way to meet people associated with public history nationwide, and provided opportunities to develop long-standing relationships with colleagues and friends.

What has your involvement been with NCPH?

I have served in a variety of roles with NCPH, including Co-Chair of the Membership Committee, Co-Chair of the Finance Committee, member of the Board of Directors, member of the Long-Range Planning Committee, Co-Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee for the Atlanta 2020/2023 conference, and a member of the NCPH Legacy Circle.

Why should other people care about public history?

Public history matters because it democratizes knowledge and shapes the narratives that define our communities. By connecting people to their local and shared past, it builds healthier communities that are better equipped to navigate current challenges and future decisions together.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

A love of music and popular culture defines my life—particularly my passion for The Beatles, which includes a collection of Beatles memorabilia that started when I was in high school.

Board of Directors

(You may vote for up to **three (3)** individuals. Board members serve three-year terms. The NCPH board defines and advances the organization’s mission, protects its financial and human assets, ensures adequate resources to carry out the mission, supervises and supports the executive director, and promotes the interests, programs, and reputation of NCPH. Members of the board include the president, vice president, immediate past president, secretary, treasurer, nine other elected members, one elected student representative, and with the executive director and the editor of *The Public Historian* serving as ex officio, non-voting members.)

Adrienne Burke

Community Planning Collaborative



What of NCPH’s interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

I am especially proud of NCPH’s outspoken leadership around advocacy for the profession and for public history practitioners, with a focus on ensuring the field remains equitable, inclusive, and diverse. I’m equally enamored by how warm and welcoming NCPH is for all members. I will continue to support NCPH advocacy efforts and would love to find more ways to continue supporting the wellbeing of public history laborers, especially during these trying times.

What’s your short bio?

I’m happy to share my official self-designated history nerd status, dating to my childhood in Montgomery, Alabama, where I became fascinated with Civil Rights-era history and historic cemeteries. I earned degrees in history, law, and historic preservation, and have managed to craft a career combining all three. You will find me scouting historic cemeteries, history museums, and independent bookstores wherever I travel.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I’m a consultant and co-own Community Planning Collaborative based in Jacksonville, Florida; we prioritize community-led, heritage-based urban planning and preservation solutions for people and neighborhoods that have traditionally been left out of planning processes. We do this because we saw contemporary planning and preservation repeating policy mistakes and not meaningfully engaging communities, taking time to understand their past, or empowering them to determine their future.

What's your NCPH origin story?

I became a NCPH member in 2022. My interest in joining was because I see how public history, historic preservation, and urban planning overlap, and I wanted to get more formally involved with public history in an effort to help bridge those professional silos.

What has your involvement been with NCPH?

I've been an Advocacy Committee member since I joined, am now co-chair along with Rachel Boyle, and I've attended NCPH conferences in 2023 and 2025. Our regular Advocacy Committee meetings and activities feel almost therapeutic and I'm grateful to work alongside these lovely humans who are equally passionate about standing up for public history.

Why should other people care about public history?

Perhaps a spicy take, but not caring about public history is tantamount to complicity in historic erasure, particularly in our era of attacks on factual and inclusive history. If we wish to achieve our aspirations of a democratic, free, and just society, people have to be aware of our real histories in order to be more informed and hopefully empathetic citizens.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

I love animals and nature; I am in forest and nature therapy guide training now and want to lead walks and nature journaling in cemeteries and other historic spaces, and I adopt Jellicats instead of adopting real animals because I would easily have 100 if I could (but shout out to my real Jellicat Morticia, a sweet and opinionated tuxedo lady.)

Rosalind (Rose) Beiler

University of Central Florida



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

I find it difficult to be brief about the NCPH because it's my favorite professional association! These are the organization's values I tell others about regularly: NCPH's inclusivity – the way its leaders and members work to make everyone feel welcomed, regardless of who you are or where you are in your career. And the tireless advocacy of its leaders and members for the history profession and the many ways we engage broad public audiences with deeply researched complex interpretations of the past. We need this now more than ever!

What's your short bio?

I often say I'm an accidental academic who began my professional history career as a historic house museum interpreter and an archivist. I eventually became an academic historian at the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando, Florida, where I have worked for over 30 years to teach early American history and build our public history program.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I still work as a history professor at UCF where I am currently focusing my energy on a digital history project – PRINT ([People, Religion, Information Networks, and Travel](#)) – about the dynamics of

migration in the early modern world. The project combines my research interests with my love for public history as we create a portal to correspondence collections from 5 archives in 4 countries written in 3 languages. I use public history theories and methods (collaboration, shared inquiry and authority, reflexive thinking, etc.) every day when working with PRINT team members.

What's your NCPH origin story?

I attended my first NCPH conference in 2010 when, as the chair of my department, I suddenly was given a lot of money to hire public history faculty. Two colleagues and I spent the entire conference talking to people and attending sessions in an amazing attempt to learn the field. Participants were incredibly generous, and networking was easy!

What has your involvement been with NCPH?

I have served on the NCPH Finance Committee since 2017 and have co-chaired that committee since 2020. That service has given me a strong appreciation for the leadership's (Board and Staff) careful fiscal stewardship.

Why should other people care about public history?

Now, more than ever, we need professional, well-trained historians to teach Americans about our past. The complex, nuanced, and critically interpreted stories public historians tell are so important in the face of the myriad fabricated pasts that dominate social media and our current public sphere.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

I am an avid gardener and love to take advantage of Florida's 3 seasons for growing vegetables.

Dylan McDonald

Branson Library Special Collections at New Mexico State University



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

NCPH should advocate not only for historical resources and programs, but also for its members who do the actual work – for better pay, benefits, working conditions, personal and professional advancement, and a voice in how their daily tasks are accomplished. The last 20 years in the field have led me to conclude that organizations must focus more efforts on protecting and supporting working public historians who are too often abused in the labor market. Public historians experience high rates of burnout, with many

choosing to leave the field; thus, I hope to find strategies to turn the tide and better support our committed members.

What's your short bio?

I'm an assistant professor at New Mexico State University where I work as the Special Collections Librarian and Political Collections Archivists in Branson Library. Ever active in national and regional archival organizations, as well as state and local historical societies, where I serve (and have served) in various roles. I am a longtime organizer with and supporter of the National History Day program.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I acquire and preserve historical resources of the US-Mexico borderlands and promote their discovery and use by students, scholars, and the public. Seeing the curious take joy in their history keeps me motivated.

What's your NCPH origin story?

Attending the #CampingCon2019: Public History Outdoors on San Juan Island introduced me to a group of fellow travelers that felt very comfortable. Sharing space with committed public historians is always energizing and I wanted more.

What has your involvement been with NCPH?

I organized the CampingCon 2024: Wilderness and the Historian in Mimbres, New Mexico; have attended multiple professional development workshops; and have presented at the NCPH annual meeting.

Why should other people care about public history?

Public history can be a powerful tool in helping to combat society's declining information literacy and to reinvigorate community identity. Our field brings people together for the betterment of personal and civic life.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

I enjoy solo hiking in the varied and inspiring environments of the American Southwest.

Samuel Redman

University of Massachusetts at Amherst



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

The NCPH is so important for many reasons. Fundamentally, the organization's most important function is to defend public history as an enterprise. My aim in this position will be to help advocate for public historians across North America, especially those in more precarious positions in the current political context. This will involve listening to evolving concerns expressed by those across the field and pushing forward initiatives to help keep our enterprise moving forward into the future.

What's your short bio?

Originally from Minnesota, I studied history, anthropology, and Native American Studies at the University of Minnesota and the University of California. My first museum gigs were at the Field Museum of Natural History, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and History Colorado. Now, I teach Modern US History, Public History, and Oral History at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where I also serve as the Director of the Public History Program.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I sincerely love working with students and scholars on all levels. As Director of Public History at UMass Amherst, I relish opportunities to connect students, public history professionals, and other community organizations to help improve outcomes for projects of all kinds.

What's your NCPH origin story?

I have enjoyed organizing several panels for NCPH conferences, the first session being a 2012 conversation about efforts to publicly display themes related to race and racism. Since that time, I have organized additional panels on museum history and oral history, but I have most enjoyed the opportunity to learn from other presenters, the chance to network at various events, and the chance to tour public history sites in host cities.

What has your involvement been with NCPH?

In addition to organizing three panels for NCPH annual meetings, I have had the privilege of writing four book reviews for the pages of *The Public Historian*. I have also mentored and helped introduce about two dozen students to the NCPH as a professional organization in the last decade.

Why should other people care about public history?

As I have said elsewhere, public history, as a field, is currently facing a five-alarm fire. To better understand who we are, where we have been, and where we might go in the future, we must work to defend public history as an independent enterprise. We must work to protect our field as one that seeks to discover and educate truthfully about history.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

I live with my son Owen (age 8) in Northampton, Massachusetts. We enjoy hiking, playing baseball, and traveling together!

Kristyn Scorsone

Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis and Queer Newark Oral History Project



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

Of NCPH's values, I would be most excited to promote Practicing Respect and Inclusiveness, Working with Communities, and Stewarding Resources Responsibly and Equitably as overlapping priorities that move the profession toward its goal of greater justice and equity. I would advocate for diverse hiring, advancement, and inclusive workplace cultures within the field; emphasize community collaboration that directly serves diverse communities rather than extracting from them; and push for funding and resources that support historically disadvantaged groups. My years working with the Humanities Action Lab at Rutgers–Newark, in collaboration with faculty, staff, and community leaders both nationally and globally, have taught me how to engage meaningfully with public history practitioners in ways that promote what Dr. Aleia M. Brown calls an “ethic of care.”

What's your short bio?

I am a postdoctoral fellow at the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis for the 2025-2026 Seminar, "Black Power and White Supremacy: The Cyclical Dialectics of Power," teach public history courses in the History department at Rutgers University – Newark and New Brunswick, and I am a public historian with the Queer Newark Oral History Project. My writing has appeared in *The Public Historian*, *The Journal of American History*, *The Journal of the History of Sexuality*, *History@Work*, *Notches: (re)marks on the history of sexuality*, *OutHistory*, and *Out in New Jersey* along with a chapter in the award-winning book, *Queer Newark: Stories of Resistance, Love, and Community* edited by Dr. Whitney Strub (RU Press) and a chapter in *Down the Road and Back Again: Critical Approaches to the Golden Girls* edited by Jill E. Anderson and Alissa Burger.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I'm currently working on my first manuscript, *A Way Out of No Way: The Labor and Activism of Black Queer and Transgender People in Newark, New Jersey, 1970s to the present*. I hope this book will serve not only as a reclamation of an important aspect of Black queer and trans history, but also as a model for readers on how to engage in community care.

What's your NCPH origin story?

One of my mentors, Dr. Mary Rizzo, graciously met with me for coffee when I was a new master's student in history at Rutgers–Newark, allowing me to pick her brain about what it means to be a public historian. I hadn't even known it was a career option, but once she explained that it's a way of doing history that makes it accessible to diverse communities and can be used to create tangible change in the world, I was sold.

What has your involvement been with NCPH?

Aside from participating in conferences, I served on the NCPH Gender and Sexual Harassment sub-committee from 2019-2023. I led the creation of a living document containing guidelines and resources, entitled, "Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Resources for Public History Practitioners, Consultants, Educators, and Students," found online here: <https://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/GDSH-Resources-for-Public-History-Practitioners-Consultants-Educators-and-Students.pdf>.

Why should other people care about public history?

Public history is empowering, particularly radical public history. It is about diversifying the material record to ensure marginalized people have a history, sharing these histories with the broader public beyond classrooms, universities, and digital paywalls, and collaborating with community members in ways that use public history to influence policy, inform organizing strategies, and shape community-driven solutions.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

I am a queer and trans person who loves queer and feminist punk rock, my friends, family, dogs and cat, and Skinny Pop popcorn.

Angela Smith
North Dakota State University



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

I want to promote NCPH's commitment to shared authority, community engagement, and inclusive public history practice. I intend to do this by mentoring students into the field through hands-on partnerships with regional museums, supporting rural practitioners, and advancing collaborative projects that center local voices and make history accessible and meaningful to diverse publics. As a representative of an off-the-beaten-path region, I will also advocate for the unique challenges

faced by practitioners and organizations in under-resourced areas, ensuring their perspectives and needs are part of the national conversation.

What's your short bio?

I am a Professor of History and Director of the Public History Program at North Dakota State University, where I teach 20th-century US history and public history. My work centers on regional collaboration, student-driven projects, and supporting small museums through field schools, exhibits, digital initiatives, and student placements. Before entering academia, I spent 25 years in the graphic design and tech fields—skills I continue to draw on daily in my public history practice.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I direct the Public History Program at North Dakota State University, working with both graduate and undergraduate students to develop projects that serve museums and communities across the region. I do this work because I believe history is powerful when it is accessible, community-driven, and grounded in the lives of real people and places.

What's your NCPH origin story?

I was introduced to NCPH by Rebecca Conard while in graduate school and have been an active member since 2007.

What has your involvement been with NCPH?

I've served NCPH through roles on the Awards Committee (Chair, 2019), the Curriculum and Training Committee, and the 2023 Program Committee, contributing to the organization's commitment to collaboration and professional development. Each year, I also use my own travel funds to bring students to the conference, helping them connect with a broader community of public historians and begin building their professional networks.

Why should other people care about public history?

Public history connects people to the past in ways that are meaningful, accessible, and rooted in community. It empowers individuals and institutions to tell their own stories and fosters civic engagement, while embracing the organic, iterative nature of historical narrative—inviting ongoing dialogue, reinterpretation, and collaboration. Public history does not shy away from conflict; instead, it uses complexity and controversy as entry points for deeper engagement, encouraging critical reflection and inclusive conversations about the past and its legacies.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

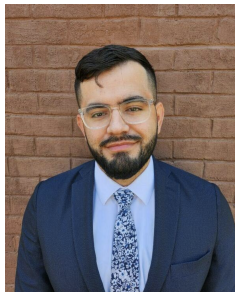
Rooted in a belief in thriving where you're planted, I carry with me the deep sense of place from my Middle Tennessee upbringing, and since moving to Fargo at 51 years old in 2011, my partner and I have come to love this region for its scale, community, and rich opportunities for connection, creativity, and collaboration—values that shape both my life and my public history practice.

Nominating Committee

(You may vote for up to **two (2)** individuals. Nominating Committee members serve three-year terms. The committee identifies, determines the eligibility of, and contacts persons to be considered for elected offices of NCPH. Each Summer/Fall, the committee compiles the slate of candidates for the annual election.)

Emiliano Aguilar

University of Notre Dame



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

As an early-career scholar seeking a supportive venue to grow and develop, I welcome the opportunity to get involved with NCPH. I believe finding avenues to develop conversations around the importance and equity of this work is key for the state of public humanities and higher education today.

What's your short bio?

I am an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, where I teach US History, particularly of Latino communities. Broadly, I am interested in politics, labor, and urban space. More importantly, I care about teaching my students to use history as a way to engage the world around us and recognize the everyday stories that speak to national narratives and themes.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I entered higher education out of an experience that was simultaneously transformative and frustrating – learning Latino History for the first time as an undergraduate. While I found these lessons truly inspiring and enjoyed engaging these histories for the first time, I also questioned where stories like mine, as a Midwestern Latino, fit – leading me to pursue the subject behind my dissertation and first book project.

What's your NCPH origin story?

I attended my first National Council on Public History meeting in Salt Lake City (2024) to participate in the “Innovation and Reinvention: Doing Public History in Postindustrial Communities,” Working Group. The conference was an amazing experience that presented me with something I had not encountered during my formal academic training – the varied opportunities to engage our historical work for the common good with a wide array of stakeholders. I loved seeing such lively engagement

among attendees and learning about the process of doing this work as much as I did about the fascinating collaborations themselves.

Why should other people care about public history?

Public history and the humanities offer seemingly endless possibilities to engage new audiences about the world around us. Through varied formats, public history fosters civic engagement, forges community identity and pride, and encourages us to think critically of our relationship with space.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

I am a huge comic book fan and find them such a great respite from work at the end of the day.

Jessica BrodeFrank

Chicago Collections Consortium at University of Illinois Chicago



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

For me it is the commitment to public engagement and practitioners' needs that make NCPH an organization I want to support in 2025.

What's your short bio?

I spent the last decade in cultural heritage institutions, running DAMS, digital humanities research, and digital curation. I've held positions at the Georgetown University Library, Adler Planetarium, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and Smithsonian's NAA, Gardens, NPG, and NMAAHC. I lead the Chicago Collections Consortium portal as part of my role as a Clinical Professor and Digital Librarian with the University of Illinois Chicago. My research, publications, and presentations continue from my doctorate at the University of London, and focus on community engagement as a means of digital engagement and digital literacy, and the enrichment of metadata taxonomies as a way towards inclusive search and access.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I am on the library faculty at the University of Illinois Chicago where I hold a dual appointment as the portal manager for the nonprofit Chicago Collections Consortium. As a proud Chicagoan, I am honored to be part of the tradition of preserving the diverse histories within my city, while also being able to inspire other metropolitan areas to engage their communities as well.

What's your NCPH origin story?

I came to NCPH during the 2020-2022 Covid-19 pivots to digital conferences. I was invited in from museum technology spaces and introduced to a whole new side of cultural heritage, the diverse group of public historians.

Why should other people care about public history?

Now more than ever, perhaps, we are reckoning with the consequences of critical illiteracy, AI slop, and echo chambers emerging from decades of prioritizing individualism, technology, and consumerism over community, humanities, and discussion. History has always been a participative

product, changing over time and with perspectives, and public historians have a special opportunity as consummate professionals, experts in negotiated authority, to bring humanities back to the center of human experience.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

Chronic illnesses have been a part of 2/3rds of my life, and in many ways have steered me into this life, where I spoil nibblings and paint greeting cards.

Patricia Cecil

National WWI Museum and Memorial



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

I'm most excited to promote NCPH's commitment to inclusive storytelling and community engagement, practices to which I've devoted my almost twenty years of experience in cultural heritage institutions. I intend to support these values by advocating for collaborative curatorial practices and amplifying underrepresented narratives in museum spaces.

What's your short bio?

I have had a passion for learning about and sharing multi-faceted human experiences my whole life — from artistic expressions to religious revelations. Cultural institutions, like libraries and museums, have always inspired me, and the foundation of my professional practice lies within the relationships between Indigenous communities and cultural institutions. I bring a background in anthropology, religious studies, history, museum studies, and public engagement to my current curatorial practice.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I currently serve as the Specialist Curator for Faith, Religion, and WWI at the National WWI Museum and Memorial, where I lead exhibit development, public programs, and research initiatives. My work focuses on the intersection of belief, identity, and wartime experience and recenters museum narratives; I do this work to honor diverse lived experiences and foster deeper public understanding of war's human impact.

What's your NCPH origin story?

I first connected with NCPH through its annual conference, where I found a diverse community of professionals committed to ethical, accessible public history, which resonated with my personal and professional values. That experience reaffirmed my belief in the power of shared authority and collaboration, as well as the importance and responsibility of public spaces for meaningful educational experiences and human connections.

Why should other people care about public history?

Public history invites everyone into the conversation about our past, making history relevant and responsive to contemporary issues; public history creates places where people can show up for each other and learn about each other in ways that are meaningful and real. At a time when many people

are losing faith in institutions as reliable sources of information, public history is building bridges between institutions and communities, helping us understand each other and ourselves.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

I am the mother of twin eight-year-old girls, who daily rekindle my passion for learning, inspire me to stand up for my values, and teach me new ways to understand our world; I also love to bake with them!

Sierra Van Ryck deGroot
Metropolitan Museum of Art



What of NCPH's interests and/or values are you most excited to promote, and how do you intend to do that?

One of my favorite parts about being an NCPH community member is the care and importance placed on providing resources and valuable support to public historians. It's not an organization that just hosts a conference and is otherwise silent the rest of the year. NCPH is a constant and welcomed presence in the field for its stalwart advocacy for public historians and cultural heritage work overall. I am excited to be a part of an organization who puts their practitioners, new and established, first and foremost.

What's your short bio?

I am the Associate Educator overseeing college and university programming at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and have a BA in Art, Design, and Interactive Media, Fine Art, and Art History from Seton Hall University and a MEd in Museum Education from Bank Street College of Education. I am the former co-president of the National Emerging Museum Professionals Network, a current board member for the New Jersey Council on the Humanities and ArtTable, and an alum of NYCMER (New York City Museum Educator Roundtable) Board. In my free time, I can be found reading, visiting a museum, or participating in many side quests related to advocating for salary transparency, actionable equity in hiring practices, the abolition of unpaid internships, and the practice of rest for all museum workers.

Tell us what you do now and why you do it:

I love working with young people who are discovering the next steps of their career journeys. Whether it is affirming a deep lifelong passion for a specific area of work or fostering a recently discovered possibility, I am honored to be able to design and facilitate meaningful experiential learning opportunities for interns at the Met, as well as college students across the country.

What's your NCPH origin story?

Like any good friendship, I don't really quite remember how I got absorbed into NCPH's sphere of influence, but it was definitely during the peak of Museum Twitter. Sarah Marsom and Lacey Wilson were two active members who kept looping me into their public history work and I never left.

Why should other people care about public history?

The best part about working in public history is seeing the moment when it clicks. In art museums, we discuss the concept of the "aesthetic experience" from John Dewey and that concept, that

moment of deep sensory enjoyment from engaging with art, I find translates similarly to public history. Seeing folks light up or get even more curious about something as we illuminate its history and importance, will always be the important work.

What is something about your personal life you feel comfortable sharing?

My handsome young man (cat), Chester, is turning 15 this year and it has been a moment to slow down and appreciate the good times.