MEIJER GARDENS ANNOUNCES HIRING OF NEW PRESIDENT & CEO

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., — January 17, 2023 — Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is honored to announce the hiring of Charles Burke as its next President & CEO. Burke succeeds longtime Meijer Gardens President & CEO David Hooker, who announced his retirement in 2022.

“I am exceedingly pleased to announce that Charles Burke has accepted the role of our next President & CEO,” said Mark Mossing, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park Board Chair. “His passion for the arts, business acumen, and proven track record of success make him the perfect fit for this role.”

“We are grateful for David Hooker’s nearly 17 years of service to Meijer Gardens and look forward to the next chapter of leadership for this wonderful organization,” said Candace Matthews, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park Board Member and Search Committee Chair. “Charles Burke’s history of leading cultural organizations is ideally suited to continue to build upon Meijer Gardens’ growth and success.”

Burke is a seasoned arts professional who brings a wealth of experience and leadership to this role, having served for the past nine years as President and CEO of The War Memorial Association in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, a waterfront cultural campus that curates experiences focusing on arts, culture, film, patriotism, community connectivity, and leadership. His work has empowered the total transformation of The War Memorial as a regional impact organization that welcomes 300,000 patrons with over 3,000 events annually, all while incubating 65 nonprofit organizations.

Passionate about providing unfettered accessibility to the arts for all people, Burke spent a significant portion of his career as both an executive and orchestral conductor for the Detroit
Symphony Orchestra. As Senior Director of Education for the DSO, he was responsible for the development of the Pincus Education Center in Midtown Detroit as well as programs such as the African American Fellowship program, a graduate-level training program to radically improve diversity in classical music; the DSO’s Civic Youth Ensembles, one of the largest youth training programs in the United States; and connecting Orchestral musicians with children from all communities and all ages through concerts, classroom interactivity, and technology-based learning.

Burke is excited to take on this new challenge and looks forward to leading Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park into the future. He will begin his tenure at Meijer Gardens on Monday, February 13, 2023.

“I am honored to be selected as the next President & CEO of such a world-renowned and beloved cultural institution,” Burke said. “I am eager to work with the talented team at Meijer Gardens, as together we continue to provide world-class experiences and advance the mission of the organization. The future is bright for Meijer Gardens, and I am grateful to the Board of Directors, the Search Committee, the Meijer Family’s deep commitment to excellence, and my predecessor David Hooker. It is because of these engaged and dedicated stakeholders that Meijer Gardens is well positioned as a dynamic leader institution committed to a shared legacy, innovative programming, and a campus that welcomes the world.”

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park recently completed a major $115 million expansion project that adds new major architectural features and renovations to current facilities, and greatly enhances the arrival, admission, and overall experience for guests. Primarily designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects | Partners, the expansion project responds to significant growth in guest attendance and programming since Meijer Gardens first opened in 1995 and acts as a place of arrival and an introduction to the gardens as an institution. Artist Jaume Plensa was commissioned to create Utopia, a site-specific sculpture for the interior of the Garden Pavilion in the new Welcome Center. The indoor Sculpture Galleries have been completely renovated and expanded and are currently hosting the exhibition Double Take: Mel Chin & Elizabeth Turk.

Photo and full bio available here.
About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the world’s most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, was recently listed in the top 45 most visited museums in the world and the 30 most visited museums in the United States by The Art Newspaper, the leading global art news publication. Education programs welcome 80,000 students and guests each year. Culinary Arts & Events offerings include weddings, corporate meetings and award-winning catering. The 158-acre main campus features Michigan’s largest tropical conservatory; one of the country’s largest interactive children’s gardens; arid and Victorian gardens with bronze sculptures by Edgar Degas and Auguste Rodin; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens, including a replica 1930s-era farm garden; an eight-acre Japanese garden featuring contemporary sculpture; and a 1,900-seat outdoor Amphitheater Garden, showcasing an eclectic mix of world-renowned touring musicians each summer. The permanent collection highlights hundreds of sculptures from internationally acclaimed artists Magdalena Abakanowicz, El Anatsui, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Mark di Suvero, Marshall Fredericks, Henry Moore, Michele Oka Donor, Beverly Pepper, Jaume Plensa, Auguste Rodin, Richard Serra, Yinka Shonibare CBE and Ai Weiwei, among others. Indoor galleries with changing sculpture exhibitions have hosted shows by Jonathan Borofsky, Edgar Degas, Jim Dine, Laura Ford, Richard Hunt, Rebecca Louise Law, Pablo Picasso, George Segal and others.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park promotes the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of gardens, sculpture, the natural environment, and the arts.