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Name of Nominee

Cynthia Robinson

Title/ Position of Nominee

Director of Museum Studies

Institution of Nominee

Tufts University

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Please describe in 500 words or fewer why you are nominating this person for the John Cotton Dana Award for Leadership.

As editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed Journal of Museum Education since 2010, Cynthia has contributed to the dissemination of ideas in the museum education field. With the goal of providing museum educators with tools, research, and inspiration, and intent to bridge the gap between museum practice and academic research, she insists that academic authors address

how their research impacts museum work (rather than research for research's sake). She coaches museum authors to shape their voices and messages, helping them transform their writing from descriptive to analytic. Since becoming editor, JME's circulation has grown, submissions have risen, and issues per year increased from three to four.

Although Cynthia has a full-time academic job, she contributes to the museum world through frequent workshops. Most recently she conducted a webinar organized by the New England Museum Association, "Write to Publish," attended by 66 participants from around the country.

As Director of the Tufts Museum Studies Program (since 2008), Cynthia is shaping a new generation of museum educators. Her goal is to turn students into activists motivated to make museums accessible to everyone through strategies of engagement that respect differences while forging connections. "This course encouraged me to think critically about complex gray areas of museum education. In particular, the difficulty that surrounds programs designed to speak for a group of people without their involvement or consent, even if the goal is well-intentioned," wrote a student recently in a course evaluation. Cynthia's constructivist style of teaching models the experience-reflection cycle of learning: "By giving us time to practice using what we've learned in a hands-on way, I was able to directly apply our readings and class discussions" wrote one student. She also teaches students how to bear discomfort when new ideas disrupt their previous beliefs, and encourages them to see the world through others' perspectives. "I think about museums and being an educator differently now," wrote another student in a course evaluation. Cynthia has shaped the Tufts program to better meet the evolving needs of museums. She's added education courses such as "Museum Evaluation" and "Museums and Digital Media." She frequently invites museum professionals who are making a difference to speak in her classes.

Cynthia's young graduate students are hitting the ground running, armed with theory, practice, and a comprehensive understanding of the field as a whole. They want museums to contribute to education and social justice, and with Cynthia's guidance, they know how to make this happen. After leaving Tufts they will also be professionally sustained through the Journal of Museum Education.

Through Cynthia's commitment and passion for museums and specifically museum education she is working to professionalize and strengthen the field on a daily basis. By mentoring and guiding students along with providing an invaluable resource for museum professionals as editor of the Journal of Museum Education, she is making a lasting contribution to museum education and I feel epitomizes the spirit of this award.

Please list any publications, links, articles, etc... that help show the impact of your nominee.

"From the Editor-in-Chief," Journal of Museum Education 41.4, December 2016, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2016.1243385>

"From the Editor-in-Chief," Journal of Museum Education 41.2, June 2016, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2016.1169731>

"Own your Expertise...But Know Where it Comes From," JME40, Museum Education Roundtable, August, 2016, <http://museumeducation.info/jme40/august2016>

"Keeping visitors happy (and giving them a place to sit)," in "My Museum's Got More Picassos Than Yours: What's the Secret to a Successful Museum? Zocalo, September 2015. <http://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/2012/09/05/my-museums-got-more-picassos-than-yours/ideas/up-for-discussion/>

"Into the Future: Adult Professional Groups and the 21st Century Museum," Journal of Museum Education 36.1 (Spring 2011).

"Create Compelling Programs Before You Market," History News, Spring 2000.

Going Public: Community Program and Project Ideas for Historical Organizations (Waltham: Bay State Historical League, 1999). Co-authored with Gretchen Sorin.

"A Priority on Process: The Indianapolis Children's Museum and "Mysteries in History," In Ideas and Images: Developing Interpretive History Exhibits (Nashville: AASLH, 1992).

"Making Good Use of Museum Resources," Social Studies for the Young Learner, March/April 1991.

Name of Nominator

Brooke DiGiovanni Evans

Title/ Position of Nominator

Board President

Institution of Nominator

Museum Education Roundtable

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