

Hotel Metropolitan Welcomes Dr. MarTeze Hammonds as Executive Director

Hotel Metropolitan, a site dedicated to honoring African American accomplishments, innovation, and history, welcomes Dr. MarTeze Hammonds as Executive Director.

PADUCAH, KY, UNITED STATES, June 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Board of Directors of the [Upper Town Heritage Foundation](#), the organization responsible for preserving the Hotel Metropolitan, has unanimously approved the hiring of Dr. MarTeze Hammonds as its Executive Director effective June 1, 2026. This marks a historic milestone as Hotel Metropolitan's first paid staff position. The Hotel Metropolitan, located at 724 Oscar Cross Avenue, is a site dedicated to honoring African American accomplishments, innovation, and history.



Dr. MarTeze Hammonds

"On behalf of the Upper Town Heritage Foundation Board of Directors, we welcome Dr. MarTeze Hammonds as the new Executive Director of the Hotel Metropolitan," said Ms. Betty Dobson. "His love of community and African American history will help him to be the perfect leader for the Hotel Metropolitan. We are confident in Dr. Hammonds' ability to take the Hotel Metropolitan to new heights."

"I live and breathe Black history. Preserving and elevating the stories, achievements, and cultural contributions of African Americans—particularly those rooted in Kentucky—is not simply my profession; it is my life's calling," said Dr. MarTeze Hammonds. "Recently, I had the privilege of speaking at a statewide conference where I highlighted Kentucky's rich and often overlooked Black history. As Executive Director of the Hotel Metropolitan African American Museum, I look forward to working closely with our Board of Directors, community stakeholders, and supporters to expand the museum's reach, strengthen its impact, and ensure that the remarkable legacy of



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Ms. Betty Dobson

the Hotel Metropolitan continues to educate, inspire, and empower future generations.”

Dr. Hammonds is a Western Kentucky native with more than 15 years of experience across higher education, Fortune 500 corporations, nonprofit organizations, and community boards. His career reflects a consistent pattern of driving organizational change and strengthening programs that support access, equity, and community engagement. Dr. Hammonds holds a Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration from the University of

Arkansas-Fayetteville, a Master of Science in Organizational Communication, Master of Science in Human Development and Leadership, and a Bachelor of Science in Theatre from Murray State University. Dr. Hammonds is also currently working towards an Associate of Applied Science in Funeral Services from John A Gupton College, which is set to be completed this Summer.

The Hotel Metropolitan has received national recognition and support, including funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund to restore the iconic Purple Room. The newly created Executive Director position is part of a transformative initiative to expand staffing, enhance programming, and strengthen the hotel's role as a cultural landmark and a driver of tourism and educational opportunities.

In 2024, the [City of Paducah](#) secured a \$1.34 million grant from the Mellon Foundation on behalf of the Upper Town Heritage Foundation to invest in the hotel's future. In 2025, the City and the Upper Town Heritage Foundation approved a three-year co-stewardship agreement to define the public-private partnership between the entities, including the City's financial support.

Upper Town Heritage Foundation's Board of Directors, in partnership with the City of Paducah, retained [KEES](#) as its executive search partner. A comprehensive and multi-phase search process was launched, attracting a large pool of national and regional candidates. The Interview Committee, led by Betty Dobson, Paducah Mayor George Bray, and Board President Rosa Scott, ultimately selected Dr. MarTeze Hammonds from an exemplary group of top finalists.

“Hotel Metropolitan is far more than a historic landmark; it is an essential part of the region and specifically, Paducah's cultural and artistic identity. Partnering with the Upper Town Heritage Foundation Board and the City of Paducah is an honor, and we are grateful to all those involved for their collaboration and commitment throughout the process. Meaningful progress toward sharing the future of Hotel Metropolitan, as a result of this search, is inspiring,” said Founder and President/CEO of KEES Heather Eddy. “We are excited to see Dr. Hammonds and the Board lead the hotel into its next chapter. Congratulations, all!”

Heather Eddy

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