

Texas' oldest library ushers in new era with nationally recognized leadership appointment

GALVESTON, TX, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Texas' oldest library ushers in new era with nationally recognized leadership appointment

The Board of Directors and Trustees of the Rosenberg Library are pleased to announce the appointment of Randle C.W. Swan as Executive Director of Galveston's historic Rosenberg Library, History Center and Museum. Swan's appointment will begin Sept 1.

As the successor to the Galveston Mercantile Library, founded in 1871, the Rosenberg is the oldest public library in continuous operation in Texas. In addition to its traditional library services, it holds extensive archives, rare books, manuscripts, museum collections, photographs, and research materials documenting the rich and complex history of Galveston and the Gulf Coast region. From the city's role as a major 19th-century port to its resilience following the 1900 Storm, the library stands as a guardian of the community's collective memory.

Swan is a nationally recognized cultural history and arts executive with more than thirty years of experience leading mission-driven museums, libraries and heritage institutions. His career has centered on strengthening historic collections, expanding public engagement, and positioning cultural institutions as vital centers of scholarship and civic life.

He most recently served as Acting Deputy Director and Supervisory Curator of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California, named by Newsweek in 2024 as the nation's "Best Presidential Attraction."

The Rosenberg Library Search Committee, comprised of board members and led by Jason Hardcastle, conducted an extensive eight-month national search for an executive director, interviewing dozens of candidates from across the region and the country.

"With Randy's appointment we have the opportunity to further advance Galveston's History Center and strengthen our role as a leading research institution," said Dancie Perugini Ware, President of the Board of Directors. He brings a rare combination of scholarly depth, curatorial expertise, and public-facing leadership. His experience interpreting history in ways that are both rigorous and accessible makes him exceptionally well suited to steward our collections and expand their reach."

The Rosenberg Library has proven to be an exceptional model for how libraries can grow and

evolve while continuing to serve as essential community anchors. "Our staff librarians, and particularly the managers of our children's and adult services departments, have done a truly superb job and continue to launch many new initiatives," Perugini Ware said.

The Rosenberg Library welcomes more than 220,000 visitors annually and serves as a vital community hub. Year to date, among its many programs, the library has hosted more than 633 meetings and sponsored 22 programs for AARP tax aid at no cost; more than 5,800 youngsters have participated in our children's programs; and more than 1800 school age children have been registered in our recently launched summer reading challenge.

The institution is named for patron Henry Rosenberg (1824-1893), a Swiss immigrant who was among the most visionary local business leaders of the 19th century.

"In the spirit of Henry Rosenberg, whose generosity established this institution for the people of Galveston, Randy understands that a historic library must be both a keeper of memory and a living, evolving center of learning," Perugini Ware said. "We are confident he will build upon our proud heritage while engaging new generations of students, scholars, and visitors. His appointment strengthens both our historical stewardship and our daily public service mission."

Alan Price, executive director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, described Swan as a brilliant leader who exudes enthusiasm and shares a palpable passion for this mission.

Widely regarded as a collaborator, Swan believes cultural assets are key to strengthening communities' identities and vitality. "The Rosenberg is truly one of Texas's great cultural treasures where history, learning, art, and community come together. Libraries and museums are more than buildings and collections because they are places where communities showcase their history, strengthen their identity, and imagine their future. I am honored by the confidence the Board and Trustees have placed in me and excited to build upon the remarkable work already being done by the library's dedicated staff and volunteers. Together, we will preserve and share Galveston's extraordinary stories, expand access to our collections and programs, and ensure the Rosenberg remains an indispensable resource for generations to come, just as Henry Rosenberg envisioned."

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