



## **Folan Stepping Down as President of Old Salem at End of 2016 Committee to Initiate National Search for Replacement**

Folan Will Become Chair of Old Salem Board of Directors in May 2017

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WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (FEBRUARY 12, 2016) – Ragan Folan, who has served as president and chief executive officer of Old Salem Museums & Gardens since February 1, 2012, will step down at the end of 2016. The Old Salem Board of Trustees' executive committee has created a five-member search committee to conduct a national search and hopes to name a replacement before the end the year. Folan will assume the role of vice chair and chair-elect of the Old Salem Board of Trustees after stepping down as president. Folan will become chair in May 2017 continuing in a leadership role for the museum.

“Ragan recently met with the executive committee and said that she believed later this year would be a logical time for new leadership,” Old Salem Museums & Gardens board chair Chris Minter-Dowd said. “The executive committee supports her decision to transition from her position as president and chief executive officer. She’s done nothing short of an incredible job for Old Salem.”

“Under Ragan’s leadership, Old Salem’s visitor attendance is up 36 percent over 2011. During the same timeframe, overall revenue is up 13 percent from \$4.6 million in 2011 to \$5.2 million in 2015 and in 2013 Old Salem retired its long-term debt. Last year, Old Salem’s MESDA [Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts] celebrated a very successful 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and this year the museum has significant plans to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Salem, North Carolina,” she added. “We will greatly miss Ragan’s service on a daily basis, but she will leave Old Salem’s staff knowing that much has been achieved during her tenure as

president.”

“In order to ensure continuity and consistency in leadership, Ragan has agreed to serve as chairman of our board of trustees at the end of my term next May,” Minter-Dowd said. “On behalf of the Old Salem board of trustees, we sincerely thank Ragan for her heartfelt dedication and tireless work for Old Salem Museums & Gardens. Ragan is fully aware that challenges lie ahead for Old Salem and is ready for the task as chair.”

Minter-Dowd pointed to the end of 2016 as a logical time for Folan to step down as president. Old Salem will have concluded its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, its \$17.66 million capital campaign is expected to be complete, and Old Salem’s recently adopted three-year strategic plan will be in its first phase.

“When Lee French stepped down as president of Old Salem, I resigned my position as board chair and became president for what I thought probably would be a couple years,” Folan said. “I quickly became even more devoted to Old Salem and have loved working with its highly talented staff, wonderful corps of volunteers, generous donor base, and supportive board of trustees. By the end of this year, I will have been president of Old Salem for almost five years. It’s been one of the most rewarding periods of my life, and I look forward to continuing to serve Old Salem in the role of chairman.”

“I am extremely proud of everything that our staff has accomplished in the last few years. Because of our successes, however, now is the opportune time to invest in Old Salem’s future,” Folan added. “Make no doubt about it, there’s much more work to be done, especially in terms of local investment. Public funding for Old Salem is critical to ensure that this historic treasure is a permanently sustainable place. As board chair, I will continue to work very hard for Old Salem as an advocate for public funding.”

Folan has been actively involved with Old Salem as a member of the board since 2005. She served as chair of Old Salem’s board of trustees from May 2010 until January 2012. Folan previously worked at IBM Lotus and served as an independent marketing consultant to the company for 11 years prior to becoming president and chief executive officer of Old Salem.

## **About Old Salem**

Old Salem Museums & Gardens is one of America's most comprehensive history attractions. Its museums—the Historic Town of Salem, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), and the Gardens at Old Salem—engage visitors in an educational and memorable historical experience about those who lived and worked in the early South. Old Salem Museums & Gardens is located at 600 South Main Street in Winston-Salem. For more information call 336-721-7300 or visit [oldsalem.org](http://oldsalem.org).

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