



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charles Allis Art Museum Secures Historic Building, Marking New Chapter for Milwaukee Landmark

Milwaukee, WI — Historic changes to one of Milwaukee’s oldest cultural treasures are being announced today by the Charles Allis Art Museum, as the organization has finalized the acquisition of the historic museum house at **1801 N. Prospect Avenue**.

The transfer of ownership from Milwaukee County marks a defining milestone—securing the long-term future of the Charles Allis mansion and its collection under independent nonprofit leadership, and positioning the museum as a community-centered cultural destination.

“We have completed three major steps in the evolution of this historic and iconic building into an independent community gathering place,” said Marquayla Ellison, Board Chair. “We’ve transitioned to a new governance model, secured ownership of the building, and are building a sustainable future grounded in community, creativity, and access.”

The acquisition comes at the culmination of an 18-month period of transformation. During this time, the organization transitioned from operating two art museums to solely operating the Charles Allis Art Museum, while the Villa Terrace has been operated by another nonprofit since 2025. The organization also formally transitioned its name from **CAVT Museums, Inc.** to the Charles Allis Art Museum, aligning its identity with its focused mission as a standalone institution.

Under the leadership of Marquayla Ellison as Board Chair—who also temporarily served as Interim Executive Director during the transition—the museum stabilized operations, rebuilt community engagement, and positioned itself for long-term sustainability. In 2025, the organization demonstrated its ability to generate \$100,000 in revenue, reinforcing its shift toward a model supported by earned revenue, memberships, private philanthropy, and sponsorships. The museum was further strengthened with the development of a two-year strategic plan (2026–2027) focused on building fundraising capacity, expanding earned revenue, and defining a clear institutional identity.

With ownership of its historic home secured, the Charles Allis Art Museum is now positioned to unlock new opportunities for private philanthropy, grant funding, and preservation investment. Now in 2026, the museum is building momentum with expanded programming and partnerships, including collaborations with the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD), continued growth of the Arts@1801 youth program, and engagement of more than 1,400 visitors this year.

“The Charles Allis has a storied history as a Milwaukee landmark and now has a vibrant future as part of our community’s cultural heritage,” Ellison added.

With a strong foundation in place, the Charles Allis Art Museum is focused on preservation, community-centered programming, and building a sustainable future that supports artists and welcomes the broader Milwaukee community.

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