

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, March 29, 2016

EMILY S. GRAND NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FRIENDS OF JOHN JAY HOMESTEAD

Emily S. Grand has been named Executive Director of Friends of John Jay Homestead, it was announced today by Friends President, Heather Langham. Ms. Grand replaces Ruth Sonshine who served as Executive Director from May 2014 until stepping down this month. Prior to Ms. Sonshine, the position was held by Wendy Ross for 10 years. Ms. Grand begins in her new role on Monday, April 4th.

Ms. Grand has served on the Board of Friends of John Jay Homestead since May 2015. As a Board member, she has chaired the Family Programming Committee and has been active on the Development Committee. Ms. Grand graduated from Harvard College in 2005 with an Honors degree in History. Upon graduation, she worked in the Development and Membership Department of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. She joined the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, NY as Development Manager in 2008 and worked in that capacity – managing all aspects of fundraising and event planning – until leaving in 2011 to raise her family.

“When Ruth shared the news of her impending departure with the Board’s Executive Committee, we knew that we had an excellent potential candidate already active as a member of the Board,” said Ms. Langham. “Emily comes to this position uniquely qualified to lead the Friends in its next successful chapter,” continued Ms. Langham. “Her development experience, her passion for history, and her understanding of our partnership with the State will help her to fulfill her charge of increasing the relevance and value of this tremendous historic asset to the various communities it serves. Emily recognizes all the potential of the John Jay Homestead to be a vibrant historic and cultural community hub.”

“I grew up surrounded by the history of the American Revolution in Concord, Massachusetts,” said Ms. Grand. “My studies and my career to date have enabled me to pursue a lifelong passion for American history. I can’t think of a better role in which for me to continue pursuit of this passion – right here in the community that I’ve grown to love.” Ms. Grand moved to Bedford from Manhattan with her husband, Harry – a native of the area, in 2014. She is the mother of three young children.

Ms. Sonshine leaves having forged unique new partnerships for the Friends of John Jay Homestead – including partnerships with the Aquila Theatre, the Katonah Village Library, Chabad of Bedford, and the FORCES (Friends of Recreation, Conservation, and Environmental Stewardship) Team at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. In addition, Ms. Sonshine spearheaded the application process that resulted in the State of New York recently awarding the Friends a grant for the development of a Circulation and Site Improvement Plan.

Ms. Langham praised Ms. Sonshine for her work as Executive Director: “We are grateful for Ruth’s outstanding contribution to the Friends and to our unique public/private partnership with the State of New York. Ruth helped us transition from a long-tenured Executive Director and redefined the position to fit the evolving needs of our organization. We thank her for all she has done in her nearly two years with the Friends.”

Friends of John Jay Homestead, a not-for-profit member organization, was founded in 1977 to increase public appreciation and awareness of John Jay Homestead State Historic Site and to supplement the

work of New York State by providing funding and volunteer assistance for John Jay Homestead's preservation, restoration and interpretation. John Jay Homestead State Historic Site is one of the six state historic sites and twelve parks administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation—Taconic Region. Heather Iannucci – an employee of New York State – is Historic Site Manager and Museum Director.

For more information, please contact Dot Voorhees, Events Coordinator/Marketing and Communication for Friends of John Jay Homestead, at 914-232-8119 or dotv@johnjayhomestead.org.

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