

# Monticello Welcomes New Senior Leadership

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CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – The Thomas Jefferson Foundation, the private nonprofit that owns and operates Monticello, is pleased to announce three appointments to the organization's leadership team (<https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson-foundation/leadership-team/>): Laura Nichols as Vice President for External Relations, Alexandra Early Carter as Chief Development Officer, and Dr. Andrew M. Davenport as Vice President for Research and Saunders Director of the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies.

"Rebuilding our leadership team through broad, open searches has been a primary task of my first year at Monticello. Nichols, Davenport, and Carter bring vital expertise and decades of experience to our work," said Jane Kamensky, president of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. "As we gear up for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, it's wonderful to collaborate with such knowledgeable and insightful leaders directing our outreach, research, and fundraising efforts."

Laura Nichols is a public affairs veteran with deep experience across the private and public sectors in Washington, DC. Prior to Monticello, she led communications for Snap, Inc.'s global policy and social impact. Before Snap, Nichols led communications for National Geographic Partners, and served as the senior communications officer for a range of nonprofit organizations, including the Center for American Progress, Motion Picture Association of America, and Public Broadcasting Association (PBS). She also previously served as a senior advisor and communications director for U.S. House of Representatives Minority and Majority Leader Richard Gephardt. A Midwest native, Nichols earned her bachelor's



Laura Nichols

degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

“Laura Nichols’ arrival as Vice President for External Relations marks an exciting new chapter for the Thomas Jefferson Foundation,” said Miki Woodard, incoming Vice Chair of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Board of Trustees. “Her expertise, vision, experience, and dynamic leadership uniquely position her to expand our reach and deepen our impact. I am excited to see how her work will inspire others and foster meaningful connections to our organization.”

In her role, Nichols oversees the departments of Marketing and Communications, Events, Digital Media, and Community Engagement at Monticello.

Dr. Andrew M. Davenport has been named Vice President for Research and Saunders Director of the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies (ICJS) at Monticello.



Andrew Davenport, PhD

Davenport joined the Thomas Jefferson Foundation in 2021 as Public Historian and Manager, then Director of the *Getting Word* African American Oral History Project. Under his leadership, *Getting Word* has experienced unprecedented growth and attracted transformative funding from the Mellon Foundation. This appointment follows his successful interim leadership of the ICJS—Monticello’s multidisciplinary research division which includes the departments of Archaeology, historical research, the Jefferson Library, *Getting Word*, and the editorial operations of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*.

“As chair of Monticello’s Scholarly Activities Committee, I’ve depended on the acuity and empathy that Dr. Davenport has brought to his role as interim Saunders Director,” said Danielle Allen, James Bryant Conant University Professor at Harvard University and Thomas Jefferson Foundation Trustee. “He’s an insightful scholar and the right leader for the International Center for Jefferson Studies. I look forward to working with him to grow Monticello’s research efforts.”

Davenport began his career in the classroom after earning a bachelor’s degree from Kenyon College. He taught at the middle school, high school, and college levels before moving into public history work. He holds a master’s degree in American Studies from Fairfield University, as well as a master’s degree

and doctorate in American history from Georgetown University. A descendant of enslaved master brewer and chef Peter Hemings, Davenport is the first descendant of Monticello's enslaved community to hold a leadership team level role at the Thomas Jefferson Foundation.

"Andrew Davenport will make a wonderful Saunders Director," said Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Annette Gordon-Reed. "His great knowledge of, and appreciation for, the archives of slavery at Monticello—and his status as a descendent of people enslaved there—will be an enormous plus."

Alexandra "Allie" Early Carter has been appointed Chief Development Officer at Monticello. Her tenure will begin in January 2025. Carter brings to the mountaintop nearly a decade of development and fundraising experience. Since 2018, she has worked at the University of Richmond School of Law where she is presently Associate Dean for



Allie Early Carter

Development & Alumni Relations, overseeing both philanthropic and alumni engagement initiatives for the law school. Prior to her time at Richmond Law, she served in development roles at United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg and Make-A-Wish Greater Virginia.

"In Allie Carter, we're gaining a talented leader whose vision and enthusiasm will transform our fundraising efforts," said Molly Hardie, incoming Chair of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Board of Trustees. "I look forward to all that we will accomplish together."

A lifelong Virginian and a double Hoo, Carter earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Virginia. She began her career in education, teaching in a Title One school for three years before making the transition to development work. She serves as vice president of the Board of Directors of her sons' school, Canterbury Community Nursery School, and also on the leadership team of Impact 100 Richmond, a women's philanthropy initiative that provides transformational grants to non-profits in the Richmond community.

"Monticello's field-defining excellence depends on its people," Kamensky said. "Collectively and with their individual teams, Carter, Davenport, and Nichols are poised to take the Thomas Jefferson Foundation to new heights here on the mountaintop, and far beyond."

## About The Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation was incorporated in 1923 to preserve Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, in Charlottesville, Virginia. Today, the foundation seeks to bring history forward into national and global dialogues by engaging audiences with Jefferson's world and ideas and inviting them to experience the power of place at Monticello and on its website. Monticello is recognized as a National Historic Landmark, a United Nations World Heritage Site, and a Site of Conscience. As a private, nonprofit organization, the foundation's regular operating budget does not receive ongoing government support to fund its twofold mission of preservation and education. For information, visit [monticello.org](https://www.monticello.org/) (<https://www.monticello.org/>).

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