

Tonya M. Matthews: Bridging Science, Poetry, and African American History

Tonya M. Matthews is an inspiring figure in education and museums. She is currently the President and CEO of the International African American Museum (IAAM) in Charleston, South Carolina. This museum is located at Gadsden's Wharf, a historically significant site where many enslaved Africans first arrived in America. Matthews is dedicated to using this location to highlight African American history and culture.

Matthews' journey into museum leadership is rooted in her scientific background. She holds a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering, a field that blends biology with engineering to solve medical challenges. Her training as a scientist has greatly influenced her approach to education and public engagement, emphasizing the importance of hands-on learning and innovation. Before joining the IAAM, Matthews led the Michigan Science Center. There, she focused on making science exciting for young people, especially those from diverse backgrounds.

In addition to her impressive career in science and museum leadership, Matthews is a published poet. Her poetry reflects on themes of identity and experience, showcasing her creativity and breadth of abilities.

At the International African American Museum, Matthews combines her expertise in science, education, and the arts to create a meaningful and engaging experience for all visitors. Her work helps to honor African American heritage and foster a greater understanding of its impact on history and culture.

