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The Cowboy's President & CEO Natalie Shirley Announces Plans to Retire in 2022

OKLAHOMA CITY – After taking the reins of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum four years ago, President & CEO Natalie Shirley has announced her intent to retire by the end of 2022.

When Shirley assumed the role of President & CEO, she became the first female to lead the Museum. During her tenure, she helped see the Museum through a two-month long closure due to COVID where many departments were forced to pivot and take their offerings virtual. Under her leadership, Museum staff was also able to address long-term challenges with campus maintenance and profitability after years of financial losses and deferred maintenance.

“It has been my honor and privilege to have been able to work with the Board and staff over the past four years,” she said. “My proudest accomplishment is that every department of the Museum is comprised of outstanding men and women who love the Museum and who work well together.”

Before Shirley retires, she will have led the museum through the completion of two of three phases of Museum improvements, including building and opening Liichokoshkomo’, the Museum’s 100,000 square foot play-based learning expansion, as well as opening a new parking structure, the construction of the Meinders’ Garden and the renovation of the Sam Noble Event Center.

“Under Natalie’s leadership, the Museum has thrived in every aspect,” said Hank True, Chairman of the Board at The Cowboy. “She will be missed and difficult to replace.”

The nationwide search for her replacement will begin immediately with the idea of finding a leader who can continue to finetune the improvements Shirley made in the years to come.

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About the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City is America's premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the Museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. The Museum is located only six miles northeast of downtown Oklahoma City at 1700 Northeast 63rd Street. Annual family memberships are available beginning at just \$40. For more information, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.