



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Melanie Thornton named as new CEO of Burritt on the Mountain

(Huntsville, AL) – Burritt Memorial Committee announces the selection of Melanie Thornton as the new CEO of Burritt on the Mountain. Ms. Thornton is an award-winning communications professional and public historian with a career spanning over 22 years across various sectors and leadership roles. She brings a wealth of knowledge in nonprofit operations, museum management, and strategic communications.

“I am incredibly honored to join Burritt on the Mountain and lead such an outstanding organization,” said Melanie Thornton.

“Under Leslie Ecklund’s leadership, Burritt has cemented itself as a premier destination and educational institution in North Alabama. I look forward to working with the dedicated team of staff, board of directors, volunteers, and community stakeholders to advance our mission and ensure Burritt’s continued success,” says Ms. Thornton.

Melanie is currently the Executive Director of Madison Visionary Partners (MVP), a nonprofit that focuses on community projects and public space initiatives in the City of Madison. Under her leadership, MVP successfully raised over \$2 million for projects such as the Madison Community Center and the Kids Kingdom Inclusive Playground. She also spearheaded the city’s first two public art murals.

Prior to MVP, she was the Director of Public Relations for the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library (HMCPL) system leading a capital campaign opening three new libraries in Madison County.

She is the former Director of Alabama’s oldest preservation organization - Historic Mobile Preservation, located in Mobile, Alabama. In her role, she oversaw the operations of several historic properties, a museum and an archive. She also worked on enhancing Mobile's cultural economy through their advocacy efforts in preserving its five historic districts.

“My experience as a public historian has allowed me to preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of our communities, a passion that aligns perfectly with Burritt on the Mountain’s mission. I am committed to ensuring that Burritt continues to inspire and educate, while preserving the stories and legacies that are so essential to our community’s past and future,” Thornton says.

She has worked in numerous community roles, both in a professional capacity and as a volunteer. Her passion for community building can be traced back to her roots, growing up in a small town in South Louisiana. She worked directly on recovery of the region after Hurricane Katrina by acting as an ambassador of the State of Louisiana and representing the tourism industry, the region’s second-largest economic driver.

She uses her volunteer time to empower women through mentorship and education by serving on the Board of Directors for the Women’s Economic Development Council. She is an alumna of the Alabama Leadership Initiative and a former committee member of the Alabama Bicentennial. She has a Master of Arts Degree in Public History and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication.

Her selection comes after a lengthy search, attracting applicants from around the region. In her new role, she will lead a team of 45 employees dedicated to providing *Heartfelt Hospitality* through daily execution of the Burritt mission.

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Burritt on the Mountain is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization centered around Dr. Burritt’s Mansion and the 19th Century Historic Park & Barnyard. Burritt on the Mountain lies in the heart of Huntsville, Alabama, atop Round Top Mountain overlooking the City of Huntsville. Dr. Henry Burritt left his home and 167 acres to the City of Huntsville and became the first museum in Huntsville. Almost 70 years later, Dr. Burritt’s vision has been realized as one of North Alabama’s premier tourist attractions. Burritt on the Mountain is an important part of Alabama’s History and welcomes thousands of visitors a year. Not only is Burritt on the Mountain one of Huntsville’s staple tourist attractions, it also is a vibrant center for historical, cultural, educational, and entertainment activities for visitors of all ages.

Experience history, learn traditional skills with a modern twist at the Burritt Folk School, explore over 4 miles of Nature Trails and enjoy concerts, festivals, cocktails and seasonal events with friends and family. From hiking our beautiful nature trails to finding history’s hidden treasures, Burritt has something for everyone in every season. Experience Huntsville’s first museum and all we have to offer at Burritt on the Mountain.