

## Edmund Barry Gaither

AAAM Board President: 1978–1980

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E. Barry Gaither is a distinguished curator, educator, and museum leader whose career has shaped the study and presentation of African American and African diasporic art. He curated numerous groundbreaking exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and as founding director of the

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists (NCAAA), he guided the institution from concept to a major cultural center with a collection of more than three thousand works and a decades-long record of exhibitions celebrating global Black visual heritage. Gaither has been an influential educator, developing and teaching early courses on African American art at Harvard College, Wellesley College, Massachusetts College of Art, Spelman College, and Boston University. His leadership in the museum field includes service on the American Association of Museums' Commission on Museums for a New Century, the Commission on Equity and Excellence, and Museums and Communities. He also co-founded and served as the first president of the African American Museums Association, later named AAAM.

A widely published scholar and lecturer, Gaither has consulted for arts education organizations in Chicago and Boston and contributed to national conversations on culture, curriculum, and community engagement. His public service includes appointments to President George W. Bush's Advisory Board on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and leadership of the national committee that commissioned the bust of Martin Luther King Jr. for the U.S. Capitol. He chaired the Expansion Arts Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. Gaither's international work spans research, consulting, and presentations in Canada, France, the Caribbean, Ethiopia, Israel, Germany, Senegal, and Mexico. His many honors include the Commonwealth Award for Organizational Leadership, the J. Eugene Grigsby Award, multiple citations for contributions to the arts, and honorary doctorates from Northeastern University, Framingham State College, and Rhode Island College.

His published essays and exhibition texts appear in *American Visions*, *Revisiting American Art*, *Black Art: Ancestral Legacy*, and numerous museum catalogues. Gaither was educated at Morehouse College, Georgia State University, and Brown University.