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From the Buffalo Business First:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/news/2022/08/01/alice-jacobs-lives-the-arts.html>

Alice Jacobs strives to be a community change agent

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Alice Jacobs has a passion for art inspired or maybe cultivated by her mother, who was an art history major. But she also recognizes that everyone should have the same opportunity to appreciate art regardless of who they are and where they live.

That's one reason she's so dedicated to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, where she has served as board president since 2018. In that role, not only is she guiding a major expansion/renovation at the Elmwood Avenue campus, but also has supported the growth of a public art program and expanded exhibitions on Buffalo's East Side.

"So many changes are happening at the museum, (including) the philosophical of who we are as an institution and who we are with the community," she said. "It's an enormous privilege to be able to shepherd this kind of change with an institution. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity."



COURTESY: ALICE JACOBS

Alice Jacobs, board chair at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

While the Albright-Knox has been her major focus, Jacobs is also working with the Jacobs Institute and sponsoring a new podcast through her Innovation Philanthropy website called The Art Dome, which focuses on visual arts.

“We’re creating conversations between different aspects of the visual arts worlds in Buffalo that would otherwise not have connections,” she said. “I really think Buffalo has so much to offer for artists: great resources like museums, theaters, music, affordable studio space. I really want to help built that.”

Art is among three of her passions, along with education and women’s issues, which she helps address through her role on the boards of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and the WNY Women’s Foundation.

Education, she says, is an ongoing process for everyone and it’s something she’s continued throughout her life, including earning a master’s degree a few years ago from the International Center for Studies in Creativity from SUNY Buffalo State.

She founded Innovation Philanthropy to put that experience to use, helping to provide opportunities for nonprofit leaders, donors and boards of directors to find creative solutions to manage their organizations.

It’s the next phase of her professional career: Jacobs previously worked as a corporate and immigration attorney. A native of Westchester, she met her husband (Jerry Jacobs Jr., co-CEO at Delaware North) at the University of Pennsylvania, then moved to Buffalo in 1990.

She calls herself a community change agent, an innovation philanthropist and strategist, with skills gained over several decades of board work at the museum and foundations, as well as with Elmwood Franklin School.

“I got interested in how boards work and how community change works and made the intention that it was my career. I work more than full-time hours for zero pay, but that’s my privilege,” she said.

“I’ve been on all these boards and was always thinking, there’s all these committed, passionate people on these boards,” she said.

“Nonprofits need innovation just as much, with all the challenges they’re trying to solve – climate change, women’s inequality, racial injustice – these are long entrenched problems we haven’t figured out how to solve yet so we have to be constantly thinking about how to refine what we’re doing.”

The Albright-Knox expansion remains a major priority: When complete next year, the museum will reopen as the Buffalo AKG Art Museum with more space for exhibits and a town square public space for community gatherings.

“The town square, it’s meant to be a community gathering spot, like the old-fashioned town square,” she said. “Somehow we need to get to the granular level of people meeting with people.”

Name: Alice Jacobs

Day job: Innovation Philanthropy

Community: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, WNY Women’s Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Self-description: Authentic

What keeps you up at night: Really wanting positive change to happen in Buffalo and really wanting this community to be seen as a forward-moving, amazing place to live and have a business. And, of course, my four dogs.

Tracey Drury

Reporter

Buffalo Business First

