



## Pauli Murray Center leader Barbara Lau Passing the Baton

After 10 years of service as the founding Executive Director of the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice (PMC), Barbara Lau has announced that she will be stepping down from her role at the end of 2022, to make way for new leadership and to pursue other creative passions.

“The Pauli Murray Center owes so much to Barbara’s persistence and faith in our mission,” said Mayme Webb-Bledsoe, Chair of the Center’s Board of Directors. “Approaching our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the Center is poised to become a fully operational historic site—and that is due in large part to Barbara’s vision and dedication, her tireless efforts and diverse skill set.”



“Through her leadership, the Center has been a key player in writing the Rev. Dr. Murray back into history,” board chair Webb-Bledsoe continues, “and through her achievements in programming, fundraising, and organizational growth, she leaves her successor with a vital and innovative organization ready to take the next giant leap into the future.”

Under Lau’s visionary leadership:

- PMC grew from an idea to a federally approved non-profit organization with a staff of 5 and an annual operating budget of \$600,000. The Pauli Murray Family Home was saved from demolition and is now a National Historic Landmark and the only NHL in the United States that focuses on an LGBTQ person of color. Lau has raised more than \$1,000,000 to support the renovation of the historic property and prepare the site to be visitor ready.
- PMC launched innovative programs, averaging more than 60 per year that engage more than 10,000 people annually. PMC commissioned and toured an original play; curated and traveled the Pauli Murray: Imp, Crusader, Dude, Priest exhibit; engaged artists and activists to create new impactful creative work; documented and shared the stories of our West End neighborhood; and inaugurated the Pauli Murray Summer Fellows program among others.

- PMC has developed crucial partnership essential to the long-term stewardship of the site with local governments, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, Trinity Church Wall Street, Iron Mountain, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Perkins & Will, the Duke Office of Durham

and Community Affairs, the Duke Human Rights Center/Franklin Humanities Institute, Self-Help Credit Union, Mobile Homecoming and Whistle Stop Tours.

- PMC has become a leader for other historic sites, museums, and community organizations, modeling new approaches to strategic and interpretive planning that center the experiences of people of color, women, and LGBTQ community members.

“Being a part of the birth and development of the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice has been an amazing journey, from a small group of advisors to a full-fledged National Historic Landmark” Lau shared. “Ten years ago, I could not have imagined what our little kernel of an idea – to bring the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray’s wisdom to the world – would become.”

In preparation for Lau’s transition, the Pauli Murray Center Board of Directors has formed a transition committee and hired Elinvar Leadership Solutions to assist with the search. The Transition committee is being led by board chair Mayme Webb-Bledsoe, Assistant Vice President at Duke University and Jeanette Stokes, Executive Director of the Resource Center for Women in Ministry in the South. Stephanie Barnes Simms, Executive Vice President for Human Resources and Administration at Self-Help is coaching the committee and providing technical support. A job announcement will be shared in Fall 2022 and more information will be available on the Center’s website.

### About the Pauli Murray Center

The Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice engages diverse communities to lift up the life and legacy of activist, legal scholar, feminist, poet, Episcopal priest, and LGBTQ+ community member, the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, in order to address enduring inequities and injustice in our nation.

The Pauli Murray Center is a National Historic Landmark site anchored by Pauli Murray’s childhood home in Durham, North Carolina. The home stands on its original site, a one-acre plot, in the historically Black working class West End neighborhood. We are becoming a fully operational, visitor-ready site. Over the next few years, we will completely rehabilitate and create an accessible historic home and education center;

build on our robust calendar of workshops, both on the ground and virtually; host community dialogues and invitations to action; and lead creative arts programming.

For more information about the Pauli Murray Center, visit [www.paulimurraycenter.org](http://www.paulimurraycenter.org).