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**DEBBIE GRAZIER NAMED SITE COORDINATOR OF SAMA'S
NEW BEDFORD MUSEUM**

Bedford – Debbie Grazier’s first professional job after college was at the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art. Now, more than thirty years later, she is returning to the Museum to lead its new Bedford site. Grazier’s second stint at SAMA begins March 15, this time as Site Coordinator of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Bedford.

Grazier was born in Egypt and has lived in Mexico, France, Belgium and India in her early life. She attended high school in Ebensburg, and it is there that she considers her hometown. After graduating from Hiram College in Ohio with a B.A. in English, Grazier came to SAMA’s Loretto Museum, where she served as administrative assistant to founding director Michael M. Strueber for ten years.

“At SAMA, I was given enormous opportunity to participate in all levels of museum management, from development and cultivation, event planning, catalog and invitation design, exhibition installation and administration,” she said.

Upon leaving the Museum, Grazier and her family moved to Connecticut, where she joined the Mattatuck Museum, an art and history museum. There she served as registrar, research and archival assistant, special event and museum rental sales coordinator and assistant to the curator. The experience provided her with a deeper understanding of museum operations.

Following two decades in the museum world, Grazier joined the leadership team of a catering company. In three years, Jordan Caterers rebranded from a “mom and pop” company to a high-end caterer servicing a corporate, not-for-profit and social clientele and was recognized as “Best Caterer” in Connecticut for more than eight years.

After rising to the position of executive director of events and design, Grazier moved on to Riverhouse Catering. In just one year as general manager, the company saw an increase in sales from \$250,000 to \$900,000. Riverhouse also grew to cater upwards of 30 events per week and provided catering services for premier galas at locations including the Goodspeed Musical Theater, New Britan Museum of American Art, New Haven Symphony and Eastern Connecticut Health Network. By the third year, the company grew to \$4.5 million in revenue.

Now, following more than 30 years in Connecticut, Grazier has returned to Pennsylvania, where she will be charged with building a new museum audience in Bedford County.

“I am a builder, so I’m excited to be in a position to build new gallery space, audience and programs for SAMA,” she said. “It is so, so exciting to be part of what will come next for the Museum. I look forward to sharing my personal and professional experiences while helping to explore and define SAMA’s future.”

To prepare for the new position, Grazier has been spending one day a month in Bedford in an effort to get a better understanding of the community.

“Bedford has, to my mind, one of the best managed/preserved downtowns I have seen for such a small community,” she said. “The streetscape is beautiful and charming. It boasts an active and healthy pedestrian presence, as well as interesting and varied commerce from shops to restaurants.”

Grazier’s efforts will help ensure that the new SAMA museum, nestled in the heart of downtown Bedford on Pitt Street, will fit nicely among that downtown façade. Located in the historic Anderson House, the museum will feature multiple galleries, displays of historic artifacts, and will offer a variety of programs. The Museum is expected to open to the public in early May.

Gary Moyer, SAMA Executive Director, and Jim Cayce, President of SAMA’s Board of Trustees, said Grazier’s enthusiasm and professional expertise will be a perfect match for SAMA’s newest location.

“Debbie Grazier’s return to SAMA comes at an exciting time in the Museum’s history,” he said. “The Bedford Museum is the most significant project undertaken by the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art in over 20 years and Debbie offers the competencies and capabilities to make the Bedford Museum something very special. She has already been working diligently behind the scenes and will hit the ground running when she takes the reins of the Site Coordinator position this month.”