

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

Welcome Remarks

Matthias Waschek, C. Jean and Myles McDonough Director of the Worcester

Art Museum

Naturalization Ceremony

Worcester Art Museum

June 18, 2019

Today is a very special day - for you, who will become American citizens via this long-awaited Naturalization Ceremony, and for the community who welcomes you to our—now your—Renaissance Court at the Worcester Art Museum. May I say on behalf of the entire Museum family, that we are thrilled and delighted to have you here. We hope this ceremony will resonate with you and that Worcester will always have a very special place in your hearts!

I would now like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests:

The Honorable David Hennessey, who will preside over this ceremony; and

Senator Harriette Chandler, who will speak to you in a few minutes.

I would also like to welcome Representative Jim O'Day and city councillor at large,

Krystian King, who represents Mayor Joseph Petty.

My staff and I thank Corey Elya and his team at USCIS, for all of the help and support they gave in coordinating this event here at the Museum. We also thank students from the South High Community School Chorus for singing our national anthem and our neighbor, Veteran's Inc., for serving as our color guard today. But, most especially, I welcome all of you: candidates for citizenship and

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your families and friends. You are the reason we are all gathered here today.

As we welcome you to YOUR Museum, take a look around you. In this space, you are surrounded by more than 50 centuries of art from all over the world. Behind me is art from ancient Egypt and Greece, the latter being the cradle of Western Democracy; to the left are our Asian galleries with works from India, China, and Japan. To the right is our Roman Gallery—where statesmanship was formulated. Above us is European art from 8 centuries. Further into the Museum, you will discover art from the Pre-Columbian cultures, from all walks of American life, and from modern artists of many nationalities. The entire human experience and history of human creativity can be found right here. This is YOUR heritage as much as it is ours. Our mission statement may resonate with you particularly on this day: this museum connects people, cultures and communities through the experience of art.

In honor of your new citizenship, we are pleased to give each of you a family membership to the Worcester Art Museum. I hope you will use it often. I also hope you will consider this space as yours—where you and your family can come to be refreshed, to hang out, to discover new cultures, and maybe to explore your own.

In closing, I congratulate each of you on this happy occasion – and welcome you to the WAM family! We are looking forward to celebrate you, immediately following the ceremony at a reception on the balcony, just above us. Please also know that you have the opportunity to get your voter registration here - democracy is a delicate plant and it dies when nobody votes. So please take your

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citizen's right to vote seriously.

We are fortunate that our beloved Senator Harlee Chandler was able to join us for this event. Harlee is President Emerita of our the Massachusetts Senate, she was the 94th at the head of the Senate, which shows you how old and deeply rooted democracy is in our state. She has and continues to tirelessly advocate for the 1st District of Worcester. Let us welcome her with an extra warm applause.