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## African American Heritage Org Announces New Executive Director



*Dawn Dawson-House*

**Columbia** -- The [WeGOJA Foundation](http://www.WeGOJA.org) (formerly the South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation) announces that communications professional Dawn Dawson-House has been named the new Executive Director of the organization.

Dawson-House was the Director of Corporate Communications for the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, where she worked for more than 31 years. She filled the agency's ex-officio seat on the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission (SCAAHC) for eight years during her tenure and was a project leader for the award-winning Green Book of South Carolina online travel guide to African American historic sites.

As Executive Director of the WeGOJA Foundation, Dawson-House hopes to expand its preservation activities in support of the SCAAHC, grow its donor base, and strengthen relationships with the business, education, tourism and civic communities for mutually beneficial outcomes.

"It is the honor of a lifetime to serve in this capacity and hopefully leverage our extraordinary story to improve the lives of South Carolinians," she said. "I will be standing on the shoulders of esteemed African American leaders who built this platform, and am humbled by their confidence in me to take it to new levels."

Dawson-House replaces Jannie Harriot, a founding member of both the African American Heritage Commission and the Foundation. Under Harriot's leadership, both have attracted some of the state's top historians, business leaders, and education and tourism professionals to serve on boards, lead projects and provide counsel. Their [accomplishments](#) range from professional development series for teachers and a curriculum-based teacher's guide to projects, workshops and events that drive advocacy for African American historic preservation. Harriot continues to serve as chairwoman of the SCAAHC.

Currently, Dawson-House also serves on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail board of directors and is a Commissioner with the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission.

The WeGOJA Foundation supports the SCAAHC in its efforts to identify and document African American historic sites, structures, districts, culture and experiences in the Palmetto State. Its successes include hundreds of new official state historical markers at places that were not part of South Carolina's archival

record, teacher's guides, a resource guide for entrepreneurs, a publication that documents historic African American schools, and oral history projects like "Black Carolinians Speak: Portraits of a Pandemic." For information on current initiatives, click here [www.WeGOJA.org/initiatives](http://www.WeGOJA.org/initiatives).

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