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Amherst Cinema Announces Retirement of Founding Executive Director Carol M. Johnson

Amherst Cinema’s founding executive director, Carol M. Johnson, has announced her retirement, effective May 18, 2020. Ms. Johnson has led Amherst Cinema since 2007 following her tenure on the Cinema’s board of directors from 2001 to 2006. Ms. Johnson’s departure is driven by her own personal health issues that she expects to have resolved via surgery later this spring.

As executive director, Ms. Johnson was instrumental in securing state and federal funding and individual and corporate donations for Amherst Cinema’s inaugural capital campaign in 2006. Over the years, Ms. Johnson has spent considerable time nurturing relationships with customers, volunteers, donors, board members, and business leaders, resulting in the Cinema’s loyal following and a robust membership base of over 6,000 members. Her commitment to innovative, world-class programming established Amherst Cinema as a cultural destination in the region and as a well-respected institution within the art house cinema community at the national level.

“I am optimistic about the future of Amherst Cinema and deeply appreciative of the expertise of our staff and the support of our big, wide, wonderful Cinema community,” Ms. Johnson said.

Thanks to Ms. Johnson’s creative vision and thoughtful curation, Amherst Cinema presents a range of special events programming in addition to its initial offering of first-run films. Ms. Johnson helped develop and implement numerous film retrospectives; ongoing series such as *Science on Screen*, *Bellwether*, and *Sound & Vision*; collaborative screenings with other nonprofits; theater, music, and dance productions in HD; and visits with filmmakers and other special guests.

During Ms. Johnson’s tenure, Amherst Cinema launched its groundbreaking arts program for third grade students, See-Hear-Feel-Film, which is now in its ninth year and serves over 1,600 schoolchildren annually from throughout the Pioneer Valley.

Additionally, Ms. Johnson’s careful stewardship of the Cinema’s finances allowed for an expansion in 2013, when Amherst Cinema added a fourth screen—the 25-seat Studio Theater.

“We are so grateful to Carol for her many years of visionary leadership. Amherst Cinema is a thriving arts organization and a beloved community gathering place thanks to Carol’s exemplary governance,” said Amherst Cinema Board Chair and President Salman Hameed. “We wish her the very best in her retirement.”

Prior to joining Amherst Cinema, Ms. Johnson held multiple legal and corporate executive management positions at MassMutual. She has served on the boards of a variety of organizations including the Happy Valley Guitar Orchestra, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in Crested Butte, Colorado.

Amherst Cinema’s longtime business manager, Holly Greeley, will serve as interim executive director until a permanent replacement can be found.

Amherst Cinema will name Theater One after Carol M. Johnson in honor of her significant contributions toward the creation of the nonprofit Amherst Cinema, her thirteen-year tenure as executive director, and for her leadership that made Amherst Cinema a regionally and nationally distinguished cultural organization. The Cinema board and staff will invite the community to a celebration in honor of Ms. Johnson’s role when a reopening schedule permits. Until then, contributions to the Carol M. Johnson Theater Fund can be made at <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/CarolMJohnsonTheaterFund>.

About Amherst Cinema

Amherst Cinema is an independent, nonprofit arts and education center brimming with world-class programs. The comfortable, fully accessible theater offers state-of-the-art projection and sound and is a welcoming crossroads for all. Amherst Cinema presents over 250 programs a year on four screens in more than 35 languages. The Cinema’s innovative education program for schoolchildren, [See-Hear-Feel-Film](#), uses the immense power of cinema to teach young learners how to write their own stories. For more information, visit amherstcinema.org.

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