



News Release

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Contact:

Karis Erwin, National WWI Museum and Memorial, (816) 888-8122, kerwin@theworldwar.org

**National WWI Museum and Memorial Names Patricia Cecil Specialist Curator
for Faith, Religion and WWI**

The endowed position is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

Link to Patricia Cecil's head shot: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/15fe1l7e16fxdr2/Cecil.jpg?dl=0>

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The National WWI Museum and Memorial announced today the appointment of Patricia Cecil as the organization's first Specialist Curator for Faith, Religion and WWI.

The position is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative, announced in December 2020. The grant establishes an endowed curator position on faith and religion and is funding other efforts to strengthen the Museum and Memorial's public programming on religion and war, enhance its online exhibitions and resources on religion and increase the collection of religious objects and materials.

"We are thrilled for Patricia to join our team at the National WWI Museum and Memorial," said President and CEO Dr. Matthew Naylor. "Patricia brings a vast amount of experience and scholarship on the role of faith and religion in society, and her passion for sharing the stories of diverse and marginalized communities will significantly increase our understanding of the Great War."

Cecil most recently served as the archivist at the University of Kansas Department of Religious Studies' Moore Reading Room.

"Religion and faith can be both deeply personal and intensely public, making this curatorship exciting and diverse," said Cecil. "I am grateful that Lilly Endowment and the National WWI Museum and Memorial recognize the value of understanding the ways in which differing faiths impacted people and events during World War I. Seeing the Great War through faith and religious experience inspires awareness of diverse global histories, a more human appreciation of the past and creates meaningful links across time."

At the University of Kansas, Cecil managed the collection for the Religion in Kansas Project, preserving resources that document the diversity of religious tradition and experience in Kansas. Cecil created and administered exhibitions, education programs and research opportunities, both on-site and online, including [Many Paths of Faith: Religion in Kansas](#) (digital exhibition, 2020), [The Roots of Pentecostalism in Kansas](#) (digital exhibition, 2018-2019), Religion in Kansas (physical exhibition, 2018) and The Study of Religion on Mount Oread (physical and [digital exhibition](#), 2016-2017).



Cecil comes to the position of Specialist Curator for Faith, Religion and WWI with thirteen years of experience in cultural institutions. She is dedicated to promoting public and scholarly engagement with unique aspects of history, with an emphasis on making resources digitally accessible. Her work focuses on communicating the human experience, often involving religious and spiritual themes, and frequently illuminates stories of marginalized communities and previously unexplored narratives.

Cecil earned her bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology with a minor in native studies from the University of Iowa. Her master's degree is in Indigenous Nations Studies with an area of specialization in museum studies from the University of Kansas.

Patricia resides in Lenexa with her husband Chris, an accountant, and their twin daughters.

About the National WWI Museum and Memorial

The National WWI Museum and Memorial is America's leading institution dedicated to remembering, interpreting and understanding the Great War and its enduring impacts on the global community. The Museum and Memorial holds the most comprehensive collection of World War I objects and documents in the world and is the second-oldest public museum dedicated to preserving the objects, history and experiences of the war. The Museum and Memorial takes visitors of all ages on an epic journey through a transformative period and shares deeply personal stories of courage, honor, patriotism and sacrifice. Designated by Congress as America's official World War I Museum and Memorial and located in downtown Kansas City, MO., the National WWI Museum and Memorial inspires thought, dialogue and learning to make the experiences of the Great War era meaningful and relevant for present and future generations. To learn more, visit theworldwar.org.

About Lilly Endowment Inc

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons J.K. Jr. and Eli through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. While the primary aim of its grantmaking in religion focuses on strengthening the leadership and vitality of Christian congregations in the United States, the Endowment also seeks to foster public understanding about religion and lift up in fair, accurate and balanced ways the contributions that people of all faiths and diverse religious communities make to our greater civic well-being.

###