

# **QUIET VALLEY LIVING HISTORICAL FARM**

## **INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF ETHICS**

### **Article I. Introduction**

Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm (QVLHF) is a non-profit, membership organization comprised of individuals and businesses acting in the public trust, engaged in the practice of history. QVLHF expects its members, employees, and Board members and officers to abide by the ethical and performance standards adopted by all appropriate discipline-based and professional organizations.

The organization and its members are to comply with all laws, regulations, and applicable international conventions. The organization and its members are expected to take affirmative steps to maintain their integrity so as to warrant public confidence. The following ethical statements and related professional standards are provided for the guidance of all QVLHF members.

### **Article II. Section Diversity and Inclusion**

Everyone makes history. American History is inclusive history. Through staffing, training, collecting, programming, and marketing, QVLHF should reflect the diverse communities it serves. QVLHF should be attuned to issues and ideas reflective of the breadth of American experience, particularly those relevant to their local communities and should avoid bias in their documentation, collections, preservation, and interpretation.

### **Article III. Intellectual Freedom**

Historical scholarship and interpretation depend upon free and open exploration and interpretation of the human experience.

QVLHF must respect all legal, ethical, and cultural standards regarding individual privacy, human-based research and access to and use of sensitive cultural materials.

### **Article IV. Historical Resources**

QVLHF will frequently have complex and varied collections. These historical resources—including collections of objects, documents, and other records; built environments, cultural landscapes, historical view sheds, archaeological sites, and other evidence of the past—are the tools through which history practitioners provide meaning to the past and are the bedrock upon which the practice of history rests.

- A. In fulfillment of their public trust, organizations members must be responsible stewards, giving priority to the protection and management of the historical resources within their care and preserving the physical and intellectual integrity of these resources.
- B. QVLHF should manage their historical resources in accord with comprehensive policies officially adopted by their governing authorities. These policies should be reviewed regularly.
- C. Historical resources should not be capitalized or treated as financial assets.

D. QVLHF should detail the process for deaccessioning objects from their collections in their collections management policy. Decisions to deaccession should be based upon the relationship of the object to the organization's mission, the object's cultural value (i.e., its ability to interpret a larger story), the physical condition of the object, and/or the ability of the organization to continue to care for the object. Under no circumstances should the decision to deaccession an object be made on the basis of its monetary value.

E. Funds from the sale of collections may be used for the acquisition of collections, or the direct care or preservation of existing collections. Funds should not be used to provide financial support for institutional operations. In the event that QVLHF may accession their contributing buildings and landscapes (cultural and historical assets that are accessible to and interpreted for the public), funds acquired through deaccessioning can be used for direct care and preservation of objects, archives, buildings, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes that provide public benefit as outlined/defined in their collections policy. Institutional policy should distinguish between building maintenance and building preservation.

F. Historical resources should be acquired, cared for, and interpreted with sensitivity to their cultural origins. All efforts should be made to be transparent about and representative of these origins.

G. The physical condition of historical resources, including a record of their past treatment, should be maintained and appropriate steps taken to mitigate potential hazards to people and property.

#### **Article V. Prohibition against Private Inurement and Procedures for Managing Conflicts-of-Interest.**

No member of the Board of Directors shall derive any personal profit or gain, directly or indirectly, by reason of his or her service as a Board member with Quiet Valley. Members of the board shall conduct their personal affairs in such a manner as to avoid any possible conflict of interest with their duties and responsibilities as members of the Board. Nevertheless, conflicts may arise from time to time.

- a) When there is a decision to be made or an action to be approved that will result in a conflict between the best interests of Quiet Valley and the Board member's personal interests, the Board member has a duty to immediately disclose the conflict of interest so that the rest of the Board's decision making will be informed about the conflict.
- b) It is every Board member's obligation, in accordance with this policy, to ensure that decisions made by the Board reflect independent thinking. Consequently, in the event that any Board member receives compensation from Quiet Valley such compensation will be determined by and approved by the full Board in advance.
- c) Any conflicts of interest, including, but not limited to financial interests, on the part of any Board Member, shall be disclosed to the Board when the matter

that reflects a conflict of interest becomes a matter of Board action, and through an annual procedure for all Board members to disclose conflicts of interest.

- d) Any Board Member having a conflict of interest shall not vote or use his or her personal influence to address the matter, and he or she shall not be counted in determining the quorum for the meeting.
- e) All conflicts disclosed to the Board will be made a matter of record in the minutes of the meeting in which the disclosure was made, which shall also note that the Board member with a conflict abstained from the vote [and was not present for any discussion, as applicable] and was not included in the count for the quorum for that meeting.
- f) Any new Board member will be advised of this policy during board orientation and all Board members will be reminded of the Board Member Code of Conduct and of the procedures for disclosure of conflicts and for managing conflicts on a regular basis, at least once a year.
- g) This policy shall also apply to any Board member's immediate family or any person acting on his or her behalf.

## **Article VI. Access**

Access to historical resources gives preservation activities their meaning. Providing and promoting equitable access to historical resources through exhibitions, tours, educational programs, publications, electronic media, and research is critical in fulfilling the public trust and mission of history organizations. Access and limitations to access are governed by the organization's collection policy and by applicable rights of privacy, ownership, cultural standards, and intellectual freedom.

## **Article VII. Interpretation**

Historical interpretation may be presented in a variety of formats.

- A. All interpretation must be based upon sound scholarship and thorough research. Sound scholarship includes reference to and respect for community-based knowledge. Intellectually honest and scholarly rigorous interpretation reflects the cultural and temporal context and recognizes the potential for multiple perspectives.
- B. QVLHF should demonstrate respect for all cultures and peoples, and it should strive to be socially responsible and inclusive in their programming and interpretation.
- C. Interpretation must use a method of delivery (historic marker, exhibit, book, program, etc.) appropriate for the intended audience.

## **Article VIII. Governance**

The primary responsibility for governance, institutional policies, financial stability, legal accountability, and safety of QVLHF rests with its Board of Directors.

- A. The Board of Directors has the responsibility to safeguard the organization's assets, including, but not limited to: the good name of the organization, its mission, its human and financial resources, collections, facilities, property, members and donors.
- B. The Board of Directors should insure that the institution maintains accurate financial records and is managed in a fiscally sound manner.
- C. The Board of Directors should insure that its organization has the financial and human resources necessary to fulfill the organization's mission.
- D. The Board of Directors should ensure proper delegation of responsibility.
- E. The Board of Directors should establish policies that reflect current legal, ethical, and professional practices.
- F. The Board of Directors should regularly review the organization's policies and ensure their application.

#### **Article IX. Human Resources**

Responsibility for the operation of QVLHF rests with the staff, whether they are paid or volunteer.

- A. All individuals in the service of history—employees, volunteers, or interns—deserve the respect and support of their peers, superiors, and the organization.
- B. Individuals employed in the practice of history deserve pay and benefits commensurate with their training, performance, and contribution to the organization.
- C. Volunteers should be held to clearly articulated performance objectives and offered the same respect as their paid colleagues.
- D. While internships provide important training experience for students and new professionals, QVLHF should strive to attempt to pay interns at a fair level reflecting the value of history work. The practice of unpaid internships disadvantages individuals who do not have access to familial or other resources that would allow them to work for little or no compensation.
- E. QVLHF should maintain personnel policies, adopted by the Board of Directors authority and distributed to all staff, documenting the terms of employment.
- F. QVLHF has the responsibility to engage personnel, including volunteers, who have appropriate training and expertise and to provide them with opportunities for additional training necessary to continue to meet their responsibilities.
- G. The Executive Director alone is responsible for the employment, discipline, and release of all other staff, subject to established personnel policies.
- H. An employee or volunteer is never wholly separable from the organization, and actions by an employee or volunteer may reflect upon the organization or be attributed to it.

- I. QVLHF has the responsibility to respect the privacy of their members, volunteers, and employees and act in their best interests.
- J. QVLHF should not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, creed, age, sex, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, or gender identity.
- K. The Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers shall not engage in or condone any type of harassment or discrimination. QVLHF strives to maintain a workplace that is free from illegal discrimination and harassment. Any Board member, employee, or volunteer who engages in discriminatory or harassing conduct towards is subject to investigation and possible removal from the organization. Complaints alleging misconduct on the part of any Board member, employee, or volunteer will be investigated promptly and as confidentially as possible by a task force of the Board of Directors appointed by the Executive Committee.
- L. The Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers should observe confidentiality and treat colleagues with respect, fairness, courtesy, and good faith, avoiding relationships with others which could compromise professional judgment or their reputation.

#### **Article X. Revenue Producing Activities**

Activities that involve the marketing and sale of products, programs, services, and facilities are acceptable ways to produce revenue and increase public awareness of, and participation in, historical activities.

- A. No revenue producing activities should violate or compromise the integrity of an organization's mission. These activities should not hamper the ability of QVLHF or staff to meet professional standards or endanger an institution's nonprofit status.
- B. Control of the intellectual content of products (e.g., exhibitions, publications, collections, programs) should not be delegated to outside parties for the purpose of obtaining financial support.

#### **Article XI. Confidence and Trust**

QVLHF exists to serve the public interest and must always act in such a way as to maintain public confidence and trust.

- A. No Board of Director, employee, and/or volunteer should use their position, or the information and access acquired as a result of their position, for personal gain or for the benefit of other organizations. All proprietary information should remain confidential.
- B. Board members, employees, and volunteers shall refrain from personal collecting when it conflicts with the collecting interests of their institution. Statements of personal collecting interests should be obtained prior to an individual joining an organization and updated on a regular basis. Collections should not be made available to any individual for personal use, either on or off the premises of the organization that owns the collections, or for any other purpose contrary to the adopted collections policies.

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