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**Bonnet House Museum & Gardens Receives Highest National Recognition  
Awarded Accreditation from the American Association of Museums**

Fort Lauderdale, Florida, December 26, 2007 – Bonnet House Museum & Gardens has achieved accreditation from the American Association of Museums (AAM), the highest national recognition for a museum. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public.

AAM Accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement. Developed and sustained by museum professionals for 35 years, AAM’s museum accreditation program is the field’s primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation, and public accountability. It strengthens the museum profession by promoting practices that enable leaders to make informed decisions, allocate resources wisely, and remain financially and ethically accountable in order to provide the best possible service to the public.

Of the nation’s nearly 17,500 museums about 775 are currently accredited. Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is one of only 48 museums accredited in Florida

“Accredited museums are publicly committed to upholding and sustaining the highest standards and practices in the museum community,” said Kim Igoe, AAM’s Interim President and CEO.

“Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is a proven leader in the museum field in providing the best possible museum services and experiences, reminding both their peers and the public exactly how much museums really matter to their communities.”

Accreditation is a very rigorous but highly rewarding process that examines all aspects of a museum’s operations. To earn accreditation a museum first must conduct a year of self-study, then undergo a site visit by a team of peer reviewers. AAM’s Accreditation Commission, an independent and autonomous body of museum professionals, consider the self-study and visiting

committee report to determine whether a museum should receive accreditation. While the time to complete the process varies by museum, it generally takes as much as three years.

"AAM accreditation signifies excellence within the museum community," said Karen Beard, Bonnet House CEO. "It is an honor to be recognized for meeting the highest professional standards for a museum. AAM accreditation positions us to participate in exchanges of exhibitions and loans with leading national and international museums. To receive AAM accreditation, we had to meet a series of high standards that AAM uses to measure professionalism in the field—particularly the manner in which collections, both living and nonliving, are curated."

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is a 35 - acre subtropical estate and historic house museum located in the heart of Ft. Lauderdale. Bonnet House, in addition to being open for guided public tours six day per week, October through August, offers a myriad of specially designed programs including school programs, adult programs and family programs. Bonnet House also has membership opportunities for local artists, emerging professionals and socialites. Music students from nearby universities and opera companies gain experience through their performances on property in the Young Artist Music Series and orchid enthusiasts have an opportunity to see and buy an exclusive selection of orchids as well as learn how to grow and care for orchids in their own homes. The mission of Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is to preserve, interpret and share the unique and eclectic historical legacy – artistic, architectural and environmental - of the Bartlett and Birch families, inspiring in our diverse audiences an appreciation for creative expression, historic preservation and natural conservation, while enhancing the educational, cultural and economic growth of the community.

Bonnet House Museum & Gardens -- 900 North Birch Road, Fort Lauderdale  
Open for tours Tues.- Sat. from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm; Sundays from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm  
Closed the month of September  
[www.bonnethouse.org](http://www.bonnethouse.org)

*The American Association of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. With more than 15,000 individual, 3,000 institutional, and 300 corporate members, AAM is dedicated to ensuring that museums remain a vital part of the American landscape, connecting people with the greatest achievements of the human experience, past, present and future. For more information, visit [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org).*

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