

Carol Alexander

President & Chief Creative Officer



Carol J. Alexander is an arts management executive, producer, storyteller and educator with a passion for culture and history that has taken her around the globe, led to the founding of two Florida museums, a theater, and the renovation of the National Museum of Liberia, and fostered her success in the business and nonprofit worlds. As President & Chief Creative Officer of MaBu: A Cultural Resource, Carol assists organizations and individuals seeking to deepen their understanding of themselves and the cultures around them.

MaBu's most recent large-scale project was designing and curating three floors of art and history exhibitions and overseeing the reopening of the National Museum of Liberia in Monrovia, Liberia, at the request of then-president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2017. The museum's 2017 rebirth – after nearly 20 years – represented an important turning point for Liberia after a devastating 14-year civil war. In addition to gathering artifacts, commissioning new art works and exhibits, Carol engaged scholars, craftspeople and students, solicited donors and planned every aspect of the opening celebration.

Known as a captivating storyteller and emcee, Carol is in local and global demand as a speaker. She has delighted audiences at the 49th Anniversary of the Callaloo Conference at Oxford University, the National Museum of Liberia in Monrovia, been featured on NBC's Nightline, testified before the U.S. Senate Energy and Environment Committee, and hosted *Amateur Night at the Ritz* for more than 12 years.

Prior to her current endeavors, Carol was Executive Director of Jacksonville's prestigious Ritz Theatre & LaVilla Museum, which celebrates and preserves the performing and visual arts legacy – as well as the historic and cultural experience – of African Americans in Northeast Florida. The founding director of the museum and theater, and driving force behind the creation of the \$6M, 32,000 s.f. facility, Carol guided the institution's artistic and educational programming for 14 years. In the process, she made the Ritz the leading African American arts institution in Northeast Florida. She also drew to Jacksonville luminaries such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Ossie Davis, Eartha Kitt, Bobby Blue Bland, Ashford and Simpson, KEM, Ahmad Jamal, Les Ballets Africains, Step Afrika, Sonya Sanchez, Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Lady Smith Black Mambazo, Nikki Giovanni and Esperanza Spalding, among many others.

Carol's groundbreaking work at the museum included the creation of an animatronics presentation celebrating Jacksonville's native sons James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson, along with a permanent exhibit on the rich history of African Americans in Northeast Florida. She also welcomed numerous traveling exhibitions highlighting the works of artists such as Jonathan Green, Benny Andrews and Baba Ishangi.

On the theatre side, Carol also produced artistic and educational programming that presented in-depth information on African American and African Diasporan culture and history. The Ritz's arts programming, including *Amateur Night at the Ritz*, drew more than 2,000 local artists to the stage and fostered the educational and entertainment careers of many young people in the community. The Ritz also gave rise to a number of permanent performing arts ensembles, including the Ritz Jazz Jamm, Ritz Voices, Ritz Institute, Ritz Chamber Players and the Ritz Jazz Band.

Carol also directs artistic and educational operations at the American Beach Museum on Amelia Island as time permits. Since producing the museum's opening events and exhibit (*The Sands of Time: An American Beach Story*) in 2014, she has continued to provide guidance on a *pro bono* basis, in honor of the lifetime dream of her spiritual mother, MaVynee Betsch, the historian, activist and environmentalist known as "The Beach Lady" of American Beach.

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In her various roles, Carol has produced shows for organizations including the (Washington) D.C. Commission on the Arts & Humanities and created artistic and educational programming for corporations such as Florida Blue, Bank of America and Citibank. She has also managed and presented artists, developed and presented innovative programs for schools, and produced a host of unique events characterized by rich creative content and meticulous planning and execution.

Carol's past clients and events include the Ishangi Family Commemoration in Banjul, The Gambia; the Jacksonville Zoological Gardens; the inauguration of Edward Waters College's 29th president; Jacksonville Country Day School, and the National Black Storytellers Festival. Her corporate experience includes promotional work for the Beni Radio Corporation (WPDQ) and service as Director of Computer Learning Centers for Control Data Corporation. A proud mother and grandmother, she divides her time between Jacksonville, Florida and Newark, NJ.

HONORS & AWARDS

EVE Award Finalist, Florida Times Union, 2015
2015 Mayor's Trailblazer Award, City of Jacksonville, Florida
African American Achievers Award, JM Family Enterprises
Women of Distinction Award, Girl Scouts of Gateway Council
Woman of Power Award, Jewish Federation of Women
Legacy Arts Award, Jacksonville Continental Society, Inc.
EVE Award Finalist, Florida Times Union, 2001
Leadership Jacksonville, Class of 1998

CIVIC & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Current

Jacksonville Airport Art Commission

Former

Jacksonville Center for the Arts, Board Member
A.L. Lewis Historical Society, Board Member & Past President
National Association of Black Storytellers, Board Member
Florida Humanities Council, Board Member (Gubernatorial Appointee)
The Bridge of N.E. Florida, Board Member
Community Connections, Board Member
Jacksonville Public Library, Board Member
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Board Member

EDUCATION

Virginia State University, Bachelor of Arts
Temple University, Master of Education

CONTACT

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