

Jean Franczyk

Jean M. Franczyk is President and CEO of the Chicago Botanic Garden. The Garden is one of the world's largest and most popular botanic gardens, hosting 1.3 million visits a year while reaching tens of thousands more through its science, learning, and urban agriculture programs.

She has led the Garden since 2016 and is driven by a firm belief that people live happier, healthier lives when they connect with nature. She loves museums and has worked in them for more than 20 years. They are modern-day public squares, she says, with the potential to bring people together across disciplines, boundaries, and disparities.

Jean is an experienced chief executive, leading organizational mergers, redesigning operational teams, driving double-digit revenue growth, and managing large governing and philanthropic boards through opportunity and risk. She is both strategic and pragmatic, leading teams to operational excellence while positioning organizations for long-term growth.

Jean joined the Garden after living in London for 11 years, where she served as the deputy director of the Science Museum, the flagship museum within the United Kingdom's Science Museum Group (SMG). With SMG, she also was director of the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester and the group-wide director of learning.

In her hometown of Chicago, she held several leadership roles in cultural institutions and government, including vice president of education and guest services at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, chief of staff for the Chicago Board of Education, and policy advisor to Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. Her first career was as a journalist. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master's degree in public policy studies from the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy.

She is a member of The Chicago Network, the Commercial Club, and the international advisory board of Botanic Garden Conservation International and is a mentor at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. She is a member of the Burnham Fellowship Class of 2020 at Leadership Greater Chicago. She is an alumna of the Getty Leadership Institute and a fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce (RSA).

When she isn't working, you might find her walking along Chicago's lakefront, at a museum or the theater, or on the sofa with a good book.

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