



Cleveland Museum of Natural History President & CEO Sonia Winner Honored Among Northeast Ohio's 2025 Smart 50 Leaders

CLEVELAND, OH—November 6, 2025—The Cleveland Museum of Natural History is proud to announce that its President and CEO, Sonia Winner, has been named one of *Smart Business* magazine's 2025 [Smart 50 Award honorees](#). The annual awards recognize the top executives from 50 of Northeast Ohio's smartest and most innovative organizations for their ability to lead with impact, creativity, and sustainable purpose.

Since their inception in 2014, the Smart 50 Awards have honored executives who build and lead organizations that are not only successful, but forward-thinking and deeply connected to their communities. All 50 honorees will be celebrated at a special event in Cleveland, where three organizations will also receive specialty awards in the areas of Innovation, Impact, and Sustainability.

As the Museum's 10th director, Winner has led one of the nation's top natural history museums through a historic period of transformation. Under her leadership, the Museum has undertaken a \$150 million *Transforming the World of Discovery* campaign, effectively reimagining a 375,000 square-foot campus to illuminate the profound interconnectedness of life on Earth. Her leadership emphasizes purpose-driven strategy, community engagement, and bringing science to life for all audiences.

"Sonia's leadership has been nothing short of transformative," said Susan Donlan, Chair of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History Board of Directors and Chief Communications Officer at KeyBank. "Her vision, strategic insight, and deep commitment to the Museum's mission have guided us through one of the most ambitious periods in our history. This recognition from *Smart Business* is a well-deserved testament to her ability to inspire innovation and lead with purpose."

In a [recent interview](#) on the podcast *In Her Land*, Winner shared her philosophy on leadership and innovation:



"Institutions are only as good as the way that they're able to change. And so, for us, it's really [about] telling the story about the Northeast Ohio region and telling [that story] about how important it is to be good stewards of our own health and the health of the environment."

In addition to this interview, Winner recently participated in the panel series [Great Institutions of Cleveland](#) presented by Case Western Reserve University's Siegal Lifelong Learning program—joining leaders of Cleveland's cultural institutions to discuss mission evolution, community relevance, and future opportunity.

About the Cleveland Museum of Natural History

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History illuminates the world around us and inspires visitors to engage with the natural forces that shape their lives. Since its founding in 1920, the Museum has pioneered scientific research to advance knowledge across diverse fields of study and used its outstanding collections, which encompass millions of artifacts and specimens, to deepen the public's understanding of the dynamic connections between humans and nature. Through its Natural Areas Program, the Museum stewards more than 12,500 acres of protected ecosystems across northern Ohio. A community gathering place, educational center, and research institution, the Museum is a vital resource that serves Cleveland and the nation. For more information, visit CMNH.org.

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