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Friday, October 08, 2004 - Page updated at 04:53 P.M.  
*Information in this article, originally published October 8, was corrected October 8. A previous version of this story about Carver Gayton being named director of Seattle's African American Museum gave the incorrect name of his grandfather, who settled in Seattle in the late 1880s. The grandfather's last name was Gayton, not Carver.*

## Director of new African American Museum appointed

By [Tyrone Beason](#)  
*Seattle Times staff reporter*

Carver Gayton, a member of one of Seattle's most prominent black families, has accepted an offer to serve as interim director of the city's new African American Museum.

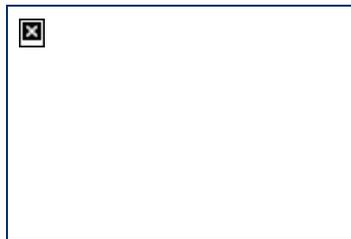
Urban League President James Kelly announced the decision yesterday. His organization will build the museum inside the old Colman School near the Interstate 90 lid.

A selection committee appointed by the League was supposed to have made its decision last month. Gayton, who sat on the committee, apparently was not a candidate for the job until the last minute.

Some of the search-committee members who attended a Sept. 17 meeting weren't entirely satisfied with the three finalists for the job, and wanted to continue the search, Kelly said. But a new director needed to be in place soon to help move the museum project forward.

Gayton's name came up while he was out of the room. Everyone felt he possessed the good standing, management expertise, contacts in the community and vision to guide the \$17 million museum into existence, said search-panel member Peter Donnelly, president and chief executive of the ArtsFund organization.

The panel offered Gayton the position, and he accepted the job on an interim basis this week. With a \$100,000 annual salary, he'll serve for the coming year and perhaps beyond while the Urban League continues its nationwide search for a permanent director. Neither Kelly nor Gayton would say how long he'd stay on the job.



Carver Gayton says he wants to create a museum that reaches out to other artistic, educational and cultural organizations.

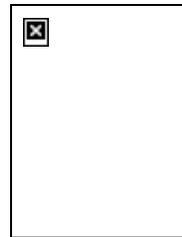
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Carver Gayton lectures part time at the UW.

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"One of the great things is he'll be able to pick up the phone from the get-go and call anyone he wants," Donnelly explained. "He comes with his own Rolodex file in place, and you can't underestimate the value of that on a project of this size."

Gayton's networking skills will come in handy right away. The \$17 million fund-raising goal for the museum is about \$2.8 million short. The 22,000-square-foot museum is scheduled to open in 2007. Housing units will be built on the upper floors of the Colman School.

Gayton's own family illustrates the history of blacks in Seattle. The Carvers arrived in the city in the late 1880s when John Thomas Gayton, the son of former slaves, moved here and worked as a servant. The family is well-known for its civic involvement.

Carver Gayton, who lectures part time at the University of Washington Graduate School of Public Affairs, is a former State Employment Security Commissioner and Seattle School Board member.

Now that he is the museum's first director, Gayton, 65, said he wants to create an institution that not only displays artifacts but reaches out to other artistic, educational and cultural organizations.

"I intend for this to be the best museum of its kind in the nation," he said. "We deserve nothing less than that."

*Tyrone Beason: 206-464-2251 or [tbeason@seattletimes.com](mailto:tbeason@seattletimes.com)*

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