A Fool's Errand
Subtitle: Creating the National Museum of African American History and Culture in the Age of Bush, Obama, and Trump
Lonnie G. Bunch III

TARGET CONSUMER: A primer for anyone dealing with community building, fundraising, politics, bureaucracy, hiring, construction, and collecting

Founding Director Lonnie Bunch's deeply personal tale of the triumphs and challenges of bringing the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture to life. His story is by turns inspiring, funny, frustrating, quixotic, bittersweet, and above all, a compelling read.

In its first four months of operation, the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture surpassed one million visits and quickly became a cherished, vital monument to the American African experience. And yet this accomplishment was never assured. In A Fool's Errand, founding director Lonnie Bunch tells his story of bringing his clear vision and leadership to bear to realize this shared dream of many generations of Americans.

Outlining the challenges of site choice, architect selection, building design, and the compilation of an unparalleled collection of African American artifacts, Bunch also delves into his personal struggles--especially the stress of a high-profile undertaking--and the triumph of establishing such an institution without mentors or guidebooks to light the way. His memoir underscores his determination to create a museum that treats the black experience as an essential component of every American's identity.

This inside account of how Bunch planned, managed, and executed the museum's mission informs and inspires not only readers working in museums, cultural institutions, and activist groups, but also those in the nonprofit and business worlds who wish to understand how to succeed--and do it spectacularly--in the face of major political, structural, and financial challenges.

- PERSONAL STORY: Offers a look inside the mind of the man responsible for creating the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Bunch’s success story, told with his characteristic wit and humility, is moving and engaging.
- LEARN FROM HIS EXPERIENCE: Bunch’s experience and takeaways will inform and inspire readers working in museums, cultural institutions, activist groups, nonprofits, and businesses who want to understand how to succeed despite major political and financial obstacles.
- IMPORTANT MESSAGE: Taps into the broader questions of the role of race in America past, present, and future. Bunch does not shy away from grappling with race, still one of the most divisive and important issues facing the nation today.

Author Bio: LONNIE G. BUNCH III is Founding Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Prior to becoming the director, he served as the president of the Chicago Historical Society and as the associate director for curatorial affairs at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

Residence: Washington, DC Hometown: Belleville, NJ
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