

Noel James

Noel James has more than 20 years of experience in multidisciplinary arts programming, working with civic leaders, arts institutions, government agencies, community organizations, schools and colleges. She joined moss+ross in 2011 and has worked primarily on the Freedom Monument Project.

She has created a system for forging partnerships between public and private sectors and has built broad audience investment through advisory groups, boards and other key stakeholders in the communities. Her skill set includes project management, program and policy development, special events management, and the ability to negotiate difficult political situations. She succeeds in bringing together various stakeholders to achieve common goals, and she has received a number of awards acknowledging her accomplishments.

Noel recently moved to Durham, N.C., after seven years in Maine. While living in New England she managed and consulted on a range of creative projects: she produced a sold-out show in New York City, "Simone: Live at Town Hall," Simone's tribute to her mother, Nina Simone; she was an on-air arts correspondent for *207*, a magazine-style show on WCSH-TV (CBS) in Portland, Maine; in 2008 and 2009 she was director of SoundSession, the Providence, R.I., music festival carnival parade with 8,000 to 10,000 participants; she implemented the Colby College Dean of Students Office initiative to build community through the arts; and most recently she served as associate dean and director of Colby's multicultural center.

A native of Minneapolis, Noel is a 1993 graduate of the University of Minnesota with a bachelor of individualized studies degree. She was raised to appreciate the arts and developed an intuitive understanding of the transformative healing power arts can have on individuals and communities. As a visual artist, she first worked with children, facilitating hands-on inter-disciplinary art workshops and residencies at arts and community organizations and schools.

She expanded her influence by joining the Children's Theater Company in Minneapolis as community programs coordinator, and subsequently she was named education manager at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. She staffed four cultural advisory boards comprising 75 members representing different ethnic groups. With their input she created programs for children and adults, serving 100,000 patrons per year. She also served on state and local arts boards as a board member, grant maker and advisor. Noel spoke to numerous arts, civic and educational organizations about arts and diversity issues.

While in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Noel moved back to her family home and became a neighborhood activist, working with neighbors, city agencies and civic leaders to shut down crack houses. In 1998 the Minneapolis City Council president asked Noel to be her chief aide. In that capacity realized that, despite its status as a major metropolis with world-renowned arts institutions, Minneapolis had no lead voice for the arts inside the city government. Following Noel's recommendation, the city council and mayor formed the Office of Cultural Affairs and appointed her founding director. In that capacity Noel worked with arts institutions, arts advocates and other civic leaders to formulate a city vision for the arts and related public policies that were adopted unanimously in 2001. These policies still serve as a framework for city leaders on all arts-related decisions. Noel also produced a number of public arts events, hosted a cable TV show *Arts City*, produced arts festivals and parades, and produced the unveiling event of TVLand's Mary Tyler Moore statue, which received international media coverage. Later, as a consultant, she produced the city-wide public program celebrating Charles Schultz's "Lucy" character in downtown Saint Paul and created a summer theater arts institute at a community organization in Minneapolis, now celebrating its ninth year.

Noel is married to Richard A. Ammons, associate dean for development and alumni relations at the Fuqua School of Business, Duke University. They love to entertain, travel, read and participate in outdoor activities associated with the change of seasons.