



**CODE OF ETHICS FOR FILOLI CENTER**  
**Approved by the Board of Directors March 20, 2019**

Filoli Center (also known as Filoli), founded in 1975 by a gift to the National Trust of Historic Preservation, is a museum with collections held in public trust and is dedicated to providing public service. Filoli is committed to uphold the American Alliance of Museums code of ethics as well as ethical standards set forth by peer professional organizations and further has outlined a code of ethics to guide the Board, Staff and Volunteers charged with management of this historic property and with upholding its public trust responsibilities.

**Governance**

Filoli Center is governed by a Board of Directors responsible for providing strategic direction for the institution, overseeing the hiring and review of the Chief Executive Officer, fundraising and responsible financial management. The Historic House, Garden and 125 acres of the Filoli property are owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation which is wholly operated by Filoli Center through a formal lease, loan and cooperative management agreement (updated and approved October 2017). As such, the Filoli Center Board of Directors is responsible for management of the property and financial oversight to ensure a sustainable future. The day to day operational management of Filoli are delegated to the CEO.

Filoli is held in public trust and operates to ensure the assets of the facility including a Historic House, Garden and Nature Preserve are available to a diverse audience. Because the Board serves the public interest as it relates to Filoli, it is accountable to the public as well as to the institution.

**General Responsibilities/Conflict of Interest**

Members of the Board of Directors are expected to carry out their responsibilities in an honest and transparent manner in accordance with the mission of Filoli, Filoli Bylaws (approved May 2017), and Articles of Incorporation as a nonprofit in the State of California.

Members of the Board of Directors are expected to maintain standards that represent the reputation and ethical standard of Filoli as all times, including:

- Comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations;
- Act in a manner to enhance the reputation of the Filoli;
- Disclose as a matter of record potential conflicts of interest that they, or a member of their immediate family, may have regarding any matters that may come before

- the Board, and abstain from discussion of and voting on any matter in which the Director or a member or his/her family has or may have a conflict of interest;
- Respect the confidentiality of information relating to the affairs of Filoli acquired in the course of their service as Directors, except when authorized or legally required to disclose such information;
  - Not use confidential information acquired in the course of their service as Directors for their personal advantage;
  - Use Filoli property only for official purposes and make no personal use of the collections, property or services in a manner that is not available to a comparable member of the general public, and
  - Annually complete and sign a Conflict of Interest Statement. Annual Conflict of Interest Statements will be reviewed by Filoli's Executive Committee.

A critical responsibility of the Board of Directors derives from its relationship with the institution's Chief Executive Officer. The Board of Directors is responsible for selection and oversight of the CEO to assure that the activities of Filoli are carried out in an exemplary manner to benefit the public. Direction to the CEO is given by the Board through channels established by it and not through the independent actions of individual Directors.

Directors shall not attempt to act in their individual capacities. All actions shall be taken as a board or Board committee or otherwise conform to the bylaws or applicable resolutions. A Director must work for the institution as a whole, and not act solely as an advocate for particular activities of Filoli.

### **Staff**

Employees are expected to comply with the Ethics Code and all applicable government laws, rules and regulations. Every staff member is entitled to personal and professional independence consistent with professional and staff responsibilities. However, because, in the public mind, museum employees are never wholly separate from their institution, in all activities Filoli employees must act with integrity, in accordance with rigorous ethical principles, as well as with the highest standards of objectivity. Employees must refrain from any private or public activity that might be in conflict with, or appear to be in conflict with, the mission and interests of Filoli.

### **Volunteers**

Filoli has a long tradition of volunteer participation. Volunteers have structured requirements that include mandatory background checks and a Code of Conduct. Volunteers are expected to understand and support the mission and policies of Filoli, including the Code of Ethics, and respect the responsibilities and requirements of confidentiality that result from their access to the collections, programs, staff activities, and privileged and proprietary information.

## **Violations**

Any real or perceived violations of the Code of Ethics will be reviewed by the CEO, Executive Committee of the Board of Directors or another appointed group of Board representatives if those listed are engaged in violation. Any party in willful violation of the Code of Ethics will be removed from their role.

## **Collections**

Central to any museum are its collections. Filoli Center maintains multiple collections: Object Collection, Library Collections, Educational Collections and the Living Plant Collection. The institution ensures that all collections in its custody support its mission and public trust responsibilities. Its obligation to these collections is paramount and careful attention is given to their protection, security, care, preservation and presentation. The libraries and archives at Filoli fall under the professional category of “special libraries and archives” as opposed to a public library. As an educational nonprofit Filoli has a public educational role, but Filoli’s libraries and archives serve the institution and its audience. To that end, staff are also aware of and adhere to the Code of Ethics recognized by The American Library Association, The Special Library Association and the Society of American Archivists.

## **Collections Management**

The physical care and accessibility of the collections of Filoli are in keeping with professionally accepted standards. It is the responsibility of Filoli to be in control of its collections, provide the highest level of maintenance, and know the location and condition of all objects contained within them. To this end, Filoli Center will:

- Manage the collections according to written management policies that outline the highest standards of care and which will be reviewed at appropriate intervals;
- Maintain precise records on all collections according to the highest museum standards;
- Train all staff and volunteers to work appropriately with the objects in the collections; and;
- Maintain consistent vigilance in regard to the conservation of the collections.

## **Acquisition and Deaccession**

The acquisition and deaccession of living and non-living collection materials is carried out according to procedures outlined in the collection policies and management plans. In making its decisions, Filoli weighs carefully the interest of the public for which it holds the collections in trust, donor intent (if applicable) and the interests of the scholarly community.

Decisions to acquire or remove living collection materials are made by administrative staff and professionally trained staff representing both historic nature and intent of the space and horticultural expertise. Appropriate staff expertise informs decisions related to the non-living collections with Board-level oversight.

Filoli is committed to acquiring plants and objects where authenticity and provenance have been established. Best efforts are made to verify all living plants and objects that enter the collection.

The disposal of collection items is solely for the advancement of Filoli's mission and the enhancement of its collections.

### **Public Access to the Collections**

The public will have access to the collections on a nondiscriminatory basis except as permitted by law in those instances when public access may endanger the collections and/or when research or other scholarly pursuits demand that items within the collections be removed from public access for a limited period of time.

### **Programs**

Filoli connects its rich history to a vibrant future through beauty, nature and shared stories by presenting exhibitions, garden and house displays, and educational activities. These programs further the Filoli's mission and are responsive to the diverse concerns, interests and needs of society.

Filoli ensures that:

- Programs support its mission and public trust responsibilities;
- Programs are founded in history and education and held to intellectual integrity;
- Programs are accessible and encourage participation of the widest possible audience consistent with its mission and resources;
- Programs are built from sustainable platforms and are respectful of resources; and,
- Programs promote the public interests.

### **Public Trust**

The name and reputation of Filoli are valuable assets and should not be exploited for personal advantage.

Employees and volunteers shall not use or disclose information obtained as a result of their employment at the Filoli, or permit others to make use of such information, to further personal interest or gain, or that of any third party.

Filoli board, staff and volunteers shall not accept gifts, loans, or other dispensations of more than trivial value that are offered to them in connection with their employment or volunteer activities at the Filoli.

Board, staff and volunteers shall not use elements of Filoli's collections, property, supplies or resources for personal gain.

Board, staff or volunteers shall not purchase or acquire excess inventory or deaccessioned

objects unless such transactions are available through a disposal process that is public in nature.

### **Intellectual Property**

Publications, lectures, manuscripts, videos, photographs and all other materials prepared by an employee or volunteer within the scope of Filoli employment or volunteer activities and any scholarly work by an employee or volunteer produced as a result of financial support from Filoli are the property of Filoli.

### **The Community**

Filoli recognizes its ethical obligation to be a good citizen in the community and make its collections and body of knowledge available as broadly as possible.

Filoli is primarily a regional asset preserving California history, but its resources are also available to people and institutions worldwide.

Programs shall respect the cultural diversity of the region and the traditions and concerns of its citizens.

Filoli is committed to sustainability and supports the preservation of history and the environment and will therefore avoid those practices, whenever possible, that science has concluded are unhealthy or unsafe and make every effort to use products that are not harmful to the environment in their manufacture or disposal.

Filoli will strive to associate itself with organizations and institutions whose values or products support its mission and public trust responsibilities.