

July 1, 2014

To Whom it May Concern:

As Executive Director of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium, I have known and worked with Chris Collora as a media professional since 2011, when I was first appointed to this job.

Chris as a multi-media journalist and has been covering the Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium since he featured it in his award-winning 2009 television series about Long Island's Gold Coast Mansions. Since then Chris has worked as a volunteer media consultant for the Gold Coast Mansions/Historic Long Island group, of which the Vanderbilt is a member.

The Vanderbilt is one of Long Island's most prominent historical and cultural treasures. The museum itself was once the summer home of William K. Vanderbilt II. He twice circumnavigated the world on his ocean-going yacht and collected marine specimens and cultural artifacts for the private museum he was building.

Vanderbilt eventually opened his museum on a limited basis to the public. He willed his estate and museum to Suffolk County, NY, which opened it to the public full-time in 1950. His intention was that it offer enlightenment and enjoyment, a mission that continues to this day. The Vanderbilt is one of the few Gold Coast-era mansions that remain and are open to the public.

As a voluntary media consultant for the Gold Coast Mansion group, Chris has eagerly shared his talents and media expertise to help promote the group's member mansions and historic sites, including the Vanderbilt Museum. It should be noted that Chris has worked with other mansions and historic sites in the group that are prominent Long Island cultural institutions, including Oheka Castle (the second largest private residence in America), Old Westbury Gardens, and Sagtikos Manor, to name a few.

Chris's personality and positive professional attitude make him easy to work with. In addition, in helping to promote and preserve historic mansions and sites, he always takes time to set up great shots and do additional takes for staff interviews, to achieve the best possible outcome. He has covered numerous news stories about the museum for AOL's Patch.com and his own news website, Long Island Online News.

Some of the Vanderbilt stories Chris has covered include the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the estate's construction; the restoration of the estate's Normandy Manor



(superintendent's house) as a designer showcase; the acquisition of a mobile science classroom; living-history tours of the mansion; the annual holiday tree lighting and decoration of the mansion; the sale of a rare Chrysler once owned by the Chrysler family to a local historian; and, most notably, the renovation, upgrade and reopening of the Vanderbilt Planetarium.

Chris has always demonstrated a deep understanding of, and respect for, history and of historical and cultural subjects. He followed up his television series with his first book, *Long Island Historic Houses of the South Shore*, which featured the lesser-known mansions on Long Island, one of which belonged to the father of our own William K. Vanderbilt II – *Idle Hour*, in Oakdale. As part of his research, Chris secured the help of 25 individual historical societies and organizations, including the Suffolk County Parks Department and Suffolk County Legislator Wayne Horsley. This is a true credit to his abilities, professionalism and toughness for accuracy as a journalist and writer. As part of his book tour, we invited him to do a special multimedia presentation in the newly upgraded Vanderbilt Planetarium.

Even though he has relocated to Los Angeles for family reasons, I understand Chris has transplanted his news website and video service, and is continuing to build on his skills. Based on his experience and excellent track record of working with museums and cultural organizations, I believe Chris would be an outstanding addition to your staff or as a freelance partner in a journalistic, public relations or media consultant role.

I would be happy to speak with you about him, and can be reached at the phone number and e-mail address below.

Sincerely,



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Executive Director
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