



CONTACT

Donna Gibson, Executive Director
Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial
Email: dgibson@Flight93nationalmemorial.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friends Announces Executive Leadership Transition; Lauren Thompson Named Incoming Director

Shanksville, PA – The Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial Board of Directors has named Lauren Thompson as the organization’s next Executive Director, succeeding longtime leader Donna Gibson, who will retire at the end of September 2026.

The appointment follows a planned succession process designed to ensure leadership continuity. Thompson will begin immediately and work alongside Gibson during a four-month transition period.

“This intentional transition sets our organization up for continued success,” said Board President Dave Finui. “Having Lauren and Donna work together over the coming months allows for a seamless handoff, preserves institutional knowledge, and strengthens our ability to serve our mission without disruption.”

During the transition, Gibson will concentrate on advancing the organization’s 25-year observance projects and programs, a key milestone initiative, while Thompson assumes increasing responsibility for daily operations, staff leadership, and stakeholder engagement.

Thompson brings leadership experience and a strong commitment to the organization’s mission. “I’m honored to step into this role and build on the work Donna has led,” Thompson said. “I look forward to working closely with our board, staff, and community partners to continue that momentum.”

Gibson, who has guided the organization through a period of growth and impact, said she is confident in the future of the organization. “It has been a privilege to serve,” she said. “Lauren is the right leader for this next chapter, and I am pleased to support a thoughtful and successful transition.”

Gibson will officially retire at the end of September 2026, concluding her tenure after completing key initiatives tied to the organization’s 25-year observance.

The Board of Directors expressed its appreciation for Gibson's leadership and lasting contributions, noting that the transition reflects careful planning and a strong commitment to the organization's future.

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ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF FLIGHT 93 NATIONAL MEMORIAL

Established in 2009, the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial is the official nonprofit partner of Flight 93 National Memorial. As Friends of Flight 93, we welcome worldwide all who would join us in honoring the sacrifice and courage of the passengers and crew of Flight 93 by supporting the mission of the Flight 93 National Memorial with volunteers, resources, and civic engagement, so as to inspire all who visit with the Flight 93 story. Visit www.flight93friends.org to learn more about Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial.