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Phillip Pierce Appointed Secretary of Mackinac Island State Park Commission

MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH. — Phillip Pierce, of Grosse Pointe Shores, was appointed Secretary of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission by unanimous vote of the Mackinac Island State Park Commissioners at its meeting May 23.

Pierce, of Pierce, Monroe & Associates, LLC, was appointed to the commission in 2019 by Governor Gretchen Whitmer. He replaces William Marvin as secretary, whose term expired earlier in 2025.

The Mackinac Island State Park Commission is the seven-member governing body of Mackinac State Historic Parks. In 1875, the government land on Mackinac Island – encompassing 50 percent of the island – was designated the second national park in the United States. It was turned over to the State of Michigan in 1895, becoming Michigan’s first state park. At that time, the state legislature created the Mackinac Island State Park Commission to be stewards of the park and its many historic structures. Due to the commission’s efforts, parkland now encompasses more than 80 percent of Mackinac Island, which includes 1,800 acres. The commission also oversees and manages parks on the mainland. The Mackinac Island State Park Commission is responsible for a combined 2,500 acres of parkland within Mackinac Island State Historic Parks, over 110 buildings, and approximately 1.7 million artifacts.

Mackinac Island State Park Commissioners, who serve six-year terms, are appointed by the governor of Michigan and are subject to confirmation by the Michigan Senate.

“I’m grateful to Governor Whitmer for initially appointing me to the commission, and to my colleagues for recognizing my contributions to the commission and electing me an officer,” Pierce said. “I view this as an additional opportunity to continue to serve on this commission, in a different capacity, of course, and to continue to be a representative of southeast Michigan while working on behalf of all of the citizens of the State of Michigan as to the activities at Mackinac.”

Pierce is the first African American commissioner in the 130-year history of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, and, as such, the first African American officer in its history. During his tenure on the commission, Pierce requested research into Black history on Mackinac Island. With the support of his fellow commissioners, this request led to the discovery that Black entrepreneurs, Jean and Jeanette Bonga, who had formerly been enslaved, opened the first-known hotel on Mackinac Island.

“I’m proud to be the first African American commissioner, and I give a lot of credit to the Governor for that,” said Pierce. “History is always evolving, and we’re always learning new information about what has been compiled to date. I do want to make it clear: I give a lot of credit to my fellow commissioners, for their support in all of the things we’ve accomplished, including support for the research that led to the revelations on the Bonga Tavern.”

A historic marker has been placed downtown on Mackinac Island near the location of the Bonga Tavern, with an official dedication later in 2025.

In February of 1985, Pierce joined with Loren Monroe, former Treasurer for the State of Michigan, to form the firm of Pierce, Monroe & Associates, LLC. The firm provides financial management and information technology consulting services with a 32-person professional staff.

Pierce is known nationally for his expertise. He has led strategic planning efforts for more than forty different organizations. His keen analytical capabilities have been utilized by several organizations in connection with process improvement initiatives. He has interacted with CEOs of major organizations regarding strategy development and organizational development changes. Pierce has been involved in

more than thirty systems implementation projects. His financial expertise has been utilized on several major client transactions. Pierce has been invited to make presentations in nearly every major American city.

In addition to the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Pierce also serves as Vice Chairman of the Michigan Governor's Residence Foundation Board, a member of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Board of Directors, and as a member of the Emergent Holdings Board of Directors. He formerly served as Chairman of the Chandler Park Conservancy Board of Directors, as Chairman of the St. John Hospital Board of Trustees, and as a member of the Wayne State University School of Medicine Board of Visitors.

Pierce graduated from the Wayne State University School of Business in the field of accounting and is certified as a Six Sigma Black Belt. He has received numerous professional and civic awards.

A downloadable version of this release can be found [here](#). A higher-resolution image of Commissioner Pierce is available upon request. For more information on Mackinac State Historic Parks, visit mackinacparks.com.

Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan's Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, the Biddle House, featuring the Mackinac Island Native American Museum, Benjamin Blacksmith Shop, The Richard & Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, American Fur Co. Store & Dr. Beaumont Museum, McGulpin House, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek, and Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present the parks' rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or online at www.mackinacparks.com.

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