



National
Public Housing
Museum

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NATIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING MUSEUM ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION GIFT FROM BASKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION

*Museum's Programming and Civic Space to be Named in
Honor of Sheldon "Shelly" Baskin*

Chicago, Illinois (September 9, 2026) – The **National Public Housing Museum**, the first cultural institution dedicated to interpreting the American experience of public housing, today announced a \$1 million gift from the **Baskin Family Foundation**. In honor of the gift, the museum will rename its most prominent public space as the **Shelly Baskin Living Room**.

Located on the ground floor, the Living Room is a vibrant gathering space where the museum fulfills its mission as a cultural and civic anchor shaping the future of housing. Since the museum's opening in spring 2025, the space has hosted free public programs and performances, film screenings, community convenings and other special events that have grappled with housing policy, brought diverse audiences together for conversations around the public good, and invited visitors to consider their own role in shaping a more just future.

It is being named in honor of the late **Sheldon "Shelly" Baskin**, a longtime Chicago affordable housing developer, civic leader, and philanthropist. Guided by his philosophy of "doing well by doing good," he pioneered a collaborative approach to affordable housing that united nonprofit organizations, faith communities, government, and private enterprise. Through these partnerships, he helped create and preserve thousands of homes for seniors and working families across Chicago and beyond, demonstrating that affordable housing could strengthen communities and enrich neighborhoods. He co-founded Metroplex, believing that creating

affordable housing was only the beginning and that thoughtful, long-term stewardship was equally essential to strong communities.

“My husband Shelly was a devoted family man, loyal friend, world traveler, and lifelong Chicago White Sox fan. He brought the same optimism, curiosity, and generosity to his personal life that defined his professional legacy,” said **Judy Wise**, co-founder of the Baskin Family Foundation, which supports forward thinking organizations with a focus on education and social justice.

“Shelly was a visionary, entrepreneur, and civic leader and his legacy endures in the communities he helped build, the lives he touched, and the belief that doing good for others is among life’s greatest achievements. To have this space at the National Public Housing Museum named in Shelly’s honor is such a fitting tribute to his life and work, and we are deeply honored by this gift,” said National Public Housing Museum Board Chair **Sunny Fischer**.

The space will be dedicated during an invitation-only event later this fall.

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING MUSEUM

Our story starts with a simple truth: that all people have the right to a home. Founded by public housing residents, the National Public Housing Museum is the first cultural institution dedicated to interpreting the American experience in public housing. Filled with history, memories, music, and art, the Museum is a welcoming community gathering place that honors the stories and experiences of public housing residents. Through partnerships and programs, the Museum also serves as a civic incubator that inspires visitors to take informed action to advance housing justice.

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