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Rebekah Mercer, Funder of Climate Change Denial, No Longer On American Museum of Natural History Board

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Conservative megadonor Rebekah Mercer is no longer on the board of trustees of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City, according to an email from the activist group Revolting Lesbians. Over the last two years, the group has led a direct action campaign to expose Mercer's funding of climate change denial organizations and advocate for her removal from AMNH's board, where she served as trustee as of 2013.

According to activist Anne Maguire of Revolting Lesbians, the group received an anonymous tip from a museum employee informing them that Mercer's name had been "quietly removed from their list of trustees."

"When we started this campaign over two years ago very few people knew who Rebekah Mercer was. That's changed now and her removal from the board of the AMNH is a result of people knowing who she is, who she funds, and calling her and the AMNH to account," said Maguire in a statement. "This is a victory for the health of our planet and our democracy."

Mercer and her father, billionaire hedge fund manager Robert Mercer, are known for helping finance Donald Trump's ascent to the presidency in 2016. The family is also a stakeholder in the far-right newspaper Breitbart News and has given at least \$36.6 million to GOP candidates and super PACs between 2010 and 2018.

In January 2018, Revolting Lesbians held its first rally outside the museum calling for Mercer's removal from the board. A week later, an open letter to AMNH signed by more than 400 scientists, including prominent Nobel laureates, urged her resignation. In a searing op-ed for the *New York Times*, signatories James Powell and Michael E. Mann described Mercer as "a sponsor of fake news and climate disinformation" and found her philanthropic beneficiaries to be "in clear conflict with the virtually unanimous international scientific consensus on climate change."

In response to Hyperallergic's request for comment, AMNH said that "Ms. Mercer's term expired in December."

Per the museum's governance policy, the term of each trustee class is three years, and elected trustees can serve up to three consecutive terms. Accordingly, Mercer would have been eligible for re-election for one more term. The museum has not provided additional details into why Mercer's term was not renewed.

According to Revolting Lesbians's research, based on data pulled from the IRS Form 990s filed by several conservative organizations, the Mercer Family Foundation has gifted over \$53 million to far-right groups, many of which actively encourage climate change skepticism or advocate for loosening environmental protections.

Among them are the Heartland Institute, a leading climate change denial think tank in the US; the Federalist Society, founded by Charles & David Koch and funded partly by ExxonMobil and Chevron; the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank; and the CO2 Coalition, an organization committed to educating the public on “the important contribution made by carbon dioxide to our lives and the economy.”