

## National Arts Club's Dining Manager Fired in Latest Shakeup

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MANHATTAN - Gramercy Park's famed National Arts Club has fired its long-time dining room manager, Joseph Frappaolo, who weathered tax evasion charges and a feud between Aldon James and current leadership.

Frappaolo, a beloved fixture at the club who ran its food operation for more than three decades, earned \$248,346 in 2009-2010, more than any other club staffer, according to the club's most recent tax filings.

He weathered controversy at the club for more than three decades, pleading guilty in 2002 to evading more than \$160,000 in state and city sales taxes on meals sold at the club's dining room, but avoiding jail by paying back more than \$340,000 in interest and penalties.

But his tenure ended this week after club officials fired him during a phone call while

Frappaolo was on vacation in Florida, sources said. The club and its dining room is closed for the summer.

"As a result of a Board resolution, changes are being made to the structure of the Food & Beverage department and as a result, Joseph Frappaolo will be leaving The National Arts Club," NAC club president Dianne Bernhard announced in a letter to members on Thursday.

She added that the move came after the board's months-long review of the club's operations in its quest to be "fiscally responsible."

She did not elaborate on specifics, but said, "The decisions that these Governors have to make are not without personal and institutional pain, but are understood to be in the best interest of our beloved NAC.

"The approval by the Board of these changes to our Food and Beverage department is exactly that type of decision."

Frappaolo was not available for comment.

Frappaolo - who sources said arrived at the club before the former president Aldon James took office - has a long and complicated history at the 114-year-old institution, which is presently under investigation for financial mismanagement by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and New York Attorney General.

After Frappaolo took a guilty plea on tax evasion for the club's dining room, Aldon James' brother John James also pleaded guilty to using the club's tax-free status to sell jewelry for personal profit.

James - who avoided jail by serving three months in a psychiatric hospital and agreed to pay more than \$500,000 in restitution and fines - remained in a below-market rate apartment at the club afterward, which the club has tried to regain control of, along with the apartments of Aldon James and their friend Steven Leitner during a long and costly legal battle.

As first reported by DNAinfo, the trio used club apartments to hoard flea market junk and antiques - believed to have been purchased with the organization's money.

The club has been under investigation since March 2011.