

For immediate release

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Kentucky Opera Announces Election of new Trustees and Officers

Louisville, KY, September 30, 2024 – Kentucky Opera, the Commonwealth’s only professional opera company, announces new officers and members of the Board of Trustees, elected at the company’s Annual Meeting earlier this month.



Danail N. Kelisakiev, *Strategy Director and Chief of Staff - Emerging International Division at Brown-Forman*, began his term as Board Chair at the Annual Meeting. In accepting this position, Kelisakiev shared, “I am grateful to outgoing Board Chair Matthew Hamel, for his leadership at Kentucky Opera in many varied roles. I have loved the opera for years, and when I studied abroad in Vienna, it truly cemented my appreciation for this powerful art form. I look forward to working closely with CEO Barbara Lynne Jamison to help achieve the strategic goals of this dynamic organization.”

Rolandas T. Byrd, *Senior Vice-President, Director of Community & Multicultural Banking at Republic Bank*, now serves as Board Vice Chair and chair of the Governance Committee. He will lead cultivation efforts for new trustees. “I’ve believed in the power of the arts ever since I played an instrument as a child. I’ve seen the impact that Kentucky Opera programs can have, and I’m proud to support the company’s vision of centering our community in our work,” Byrd said.

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The board also welcomes two new trustees. **Reneé Campbell, Ed.D.** has previously served as President and CEO of Wesley House Community Services and led employability skills training at the Center for Women and Families. **Kylee Marcy** is an Investment Advisor at Legato Financial Group.

At its Annual Meeting, the company expressed gratitude to the board members whose terms end this year: Benjamin J. Evans, Spencer E. Harper III, Henry H. Kuehn, Anita M. Streeter, and Ernest W. Williams.

Hamel said of these new appointments, "It has been an honor to serve as Chair of Kentucky Opera's Board of Trustees, and I am grateful to see such capable individuals stepping up to lead Kentucky Opera into its next, bright chapter."

This new season and change of board leadership coincides with the renewal of CEO Barbara Lynne Jamison's contract through 2028. "Barbara's leadership and fiscal responsibility have brought the company through a turbulent period, and as a result, our company is on sure footing. We are thrilled that she agreed to stay at Kentucky Opera for an extended term," Hamel shared at the Annual Meeting with trustees, staff, patrons, and invited guests.

Kentucky Opera's 2024/25 Season begins on October 6, 2024 at 4p.m. with a performance by baritone Jorell Williams and pianist Taylor Burkhardt. *Amplify Freedom Songs: Celebrating Fannie Lou Hamer* will feature classical songs and spirituals at the Kentucky Opera Center for Cultural Health to celebrate the civil rights icon's birthday. More info at KYOpera.org.

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About Kentucky Opera

For more than 70 years, Kentucky Opera has enriched the cultural and artistic landscape of the region. Designated the State Opera in 1982, Kentucky Opera is a producing company dedicated to sparking discovery, joy, and connection through the shared experience of music and theatre. We believe the power of the arts encourages a more empathetic, compassionate, and just community.

In 2022, the Kentucky Opera Center for Cultural Health opened in downtown Louisville as the company's hub for cultural enrichment events, after-school youth programs, and civic engagement opportunities. It also joins the iconic Brown Theatre as a performance venue for Kentucky Opera productions.