



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COCA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF NEW BOARD PRESIDENT AND NAMES BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

William “Bill” Carson, Vice President and Business Development Officer for U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation, Appointed as President of COCA Board of Directors

ST. LOUIS—[COCA](#), the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country, announces the appointment of William Carson as president of its board of directors. Carson succeeds Jesse Hunter, who was board president from 2015 to 2020.

Bill Carson has been a COCA board member since 2006, serving in a variety of vice president roles on the Executive Committee. Prior to his board service, Carson served as a COCA partner through his leadership at the Vashon Education Compact (2003–2006) and as co-chair of COCA’s committee for its school and community-based work. He received COCA’s Newell S. “Jim” Knight Service Award in 2015 for his efforts to advance the organization’s work in the St. Louis community.

“After two decades of involvement with COCA—as a community partner, parent, board and executive committee member, and as part of the Create Our Future campaign steering committee, I’m honored to serve as COCA board president,” said Bill Carson. “Despite these unprecedented times, COCA has successfully completed its most significant capital expansion ever, and we will emerge with an even stronger ability to teach, create, and showcase art that uplifts community.”

As Vice President and Business Development Officer for U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation (USB CDC), Carson leads New Markets Tax Credit business development in the Southeastern U.S., providing capital to create and retain jobs, establish critically needed community services and facilities, finance commercial and residential real estate, and improve quality of life in disinvested neighborhoods. Prior to joining U.S. Bank in 2014, he led renewable energy and sustainability services for the McCormack Baron Salazar (MBS) Companies.

Carson is a Cornell Engineering alumnus and holds master’s degrees in Engineering & Policy and Engineering Management from Washington University. He is an active civic participant in the City of St. Louis and is passionate about improving economic outcomes in distressed, urban communities.

“We are sincerely grateful for Jesse’s years of leadership and dedication to COCA as board president. He played an instrumental role in the successful completion of our Create Our Future campaign and campus expansion,” said Kelly Pollock, COCA Executive Director.

“As we look to our future, I’m thrilled to have Bill at the helm of COCA’s board. Given his long-term commitment to our mission and our people, and his deep engagement throughout the St. Louis community, he is absolutely the right leader to guide this exciting next chapter of COCA’s work.”

The 2020–2021 executive committee members are:

- **Rhonda Carter Adams**, VP Board Nominating
- **Hunter Brown**, VP Development
- **Shereen Fischer**, VP Programs
- **Carolyn Gold**, Secretary

- **Diedre Gray**, VP Human Resources
- **Kristin Johnson**, VP
- **Suzanne Johnson**, VP Development
- **Ray Kalinowski**, Treasurer
- **Kim Kuehner**, VP
- **Elizabeth Mannen**, VP Board Nominating
- **Tom Minogue**, VP
- **Brian Thomas**, VP Organizational Design & Strategy
- **Elizabeth Tucker**, VP Organizational Design & Strategy
- **Kent Turner**, VP Facility

A complete list of board members can be found on COCA's website at <https://www.cocastl.org/board>.

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ABOUT COCA

COCA's mission is to *enrich lives and build community through the arts*. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves over 50,000 students, audience members, artists and families from over 220 zip codes across the St. Louis region every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of over 200 artists at the heart its work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and on-site at its campus in University City.