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CHICAGO DRAMATISTS NAMES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Makes other appointments to better serve its mission of playwright development

Chicago Dramatists, devoted to the development of new plays and the nurturing of new and established playwrights since 1979, announces a variety of administrative appointments, including the naming of Victoria Podesta as Executive Director.

Podesta is a retired executive and former Chief Communications Officer of a Chicago-based, global, Fortune 50 company. There she reported to the CEO, served on the five-member executive leadership council, led global teams, and was responsible for reputation management and worldwide communications activities, including advertising, marketing and brand management; employee, financial and shareholder communication; media relations; sustainability; community engagement; and corporate giving. She is also a playwright. In 2015, Chicago Dramatists played a key role in helping Podesta develop her one-person show *The Designated Daughter*, which went on to successful runs in New York and San Francisco.

“Victoria is a playwright with a long history of involvement with Chicago Dramatists and a true love of the organization,” said Chicago Dramatists Board Chairperson Debra Gilbert Rosenberg. “Victoria’s passion for theater and commitment to our mission of playwright development, along with her vast business skills and talent, make her the perfect choice for Executive Director as Chicago Dramatists works to strengthen its role as the hub for new play development in Chicago.”

“I am truly excited at the opportunity to help lead Chicago Dramatists to its next level of success,” Podesta said. “The commitment to developing and supporting dramatic writers at every stage of their evolution is the lifeblood of this organization and it is something I support

wholeheartedly. It is also something I personally benefitted from, and I am passionate about helping others do the same.”

Chicago Dramatists also announces other key appointments.

Playwright Robert Tenges has been named Resident Playwright Representative to the Board and team leader of the volunteer Artistic Directing Associates, reporting to the Executive Director. This team will manage CD's signature Saturday Series, which provides staged readings of new plays in advanced development. The Artistic Directing Associates will be responsible for choosing scripts and overseeing the scheduling, casting, and directing of readings. They will also work with Podesta to design a more robust Script Lab program. This will allow greater opportunities for Resident Playwrights to offer script analysis services to a wider range of writers.

Long-time CD teacher and Resident Playwright Arlene Malinowski, Ph.D., has been named Director of Education. Drawing on her expertise in curriculum development and deep knowledge of the needs and interests of CD students, Malinowski will enable CD to better meet the needs of writers throughout Chicago and the nation.

Cathy Earnest will oversee a revamped Network Playwright program, open to any early and mid-career playwrights seeking community and development and mentoring opportunities, including CD's First Draft reading series.

Staff member Zach Robinson will continue to serve as operations manager, including responsibilities for the technical and physical requirements of the theater.

“As we approach our 50th anniversary, there are so many exciting things happening that we know will help strengthen Chicago Dramatists' role as the hub for new play development,” Rosenberg said. “We remain passionately dedicated to the vision that every dramatic writer, regardless of background or experience, should have the support, training, and tools to explore their artistic vision, express themselves fully, and realize their creative potential.”

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