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## **Virginia Commission for the Arts Announces New Officers and Continued Focus on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access**

**Richmond, VA--July 14, 2021** – The Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) is pleased to announce its officers for the 2022 fiscal year: Chair – Asa Jackson, from Hampton Roads; Vice Chair – Dr. Dena Jennings, from Orange; and Secretary – Terry Buntrock, from Williamsburg.

Mr. Jackson is a visual artist, curator, and director originally from Hampton Roads. As a youth, he attended Hampton Roads Academy where he developed his love for painting and art making. Jackson went on to study sociology at Boston University, and in 2010, moved to New York to pursue a career in the arts. He got his start by being featured in several group exhibits, eventually landing a contract and solo show at Samuel Owen Gallery in Greenwich, Connecticut. Jackson returned to Hampton in 2012, and later opened 670 Gallery. In 2015, he and colleagues founded the Contemporary Arts Network, an art advisory and special projects unit that heads municipal and private projects throughout the region. They established headquarters in Newport News in 2020.

In 2019, Jackson was recognized as one of Hampton Roads' Top 40 Under 40 by Inside Business. Jackson represents Virginia on the board of the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the Regional Arts Organization (RAO) of which the Virginia Commission for the Arts is a member. Appointed to the Commission by Governor Ralph Northam in 2019, Jackson has served on the Commission's inaugural IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) Committee, in addition to Executive.

Dr. Dena Jennings is a physician and artist with an office and studio in Orange County. She is an internal medicine specialist in private practice. Dr. Jennings is a luthier and sculptor of traditional gourd instruments found around the world – including gourd banjos and fiddles of Appalachia. She has also led professional development for arts organizations on diversity and equity topics such as cultural sensitivity in arts programming, having presented at the Commission's annual Art Works for Virginia conference. Jennings was appointed by Governor Ralph Northam in 2020. In that time, Jennings has chaired the Budget and Policy Committee, and served on the IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) Committee.

After retiring from 25 years in national marketing and sales in the Investment Casting Industry, Terry Emory Buntrock turned her focus to creative placemaking. She served on the boards for many arts organizations in the Williamsburg region and became a freelance arts and culture

writer. She was Chair of the Williamsburg Area Arts Commission, the Williamsburg Beautification Committee, and the Cultural Alliance of Greater Hampton Roads. As the Regional Arts Coordinator, Buntrock served the municipal offices of economic development to promote and advance the arts as a driver for tourism. In 2015 Buntrock founded the Triangle Arts & Culture League, Inc. (TACL.) The non-profit's mission is to support, develop and promote Public Art in all forms, so that art is accessible to everyone. TACL is currently funding a literary arts project that honors the accomplishments of remarkable women in the region, and is set to be published in 2023. Buntrock was appointed by Governor Ralph Northam in 2019, and has served on the Commission's Arts Education Committee.

These officers will be leading the Commission in the continued development of policy and practice related to the agency's commitment to IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access). The Commission adopted its first-ever [Cultural Equity Statement](#) in 2018; instituted the IDEA Committee in 2018; and at its June Commission Board meeting, adopted revised policy that makes the IDEA principles an integral part of the agency's operations, grantmaking and other programmatic supports.

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is the state agency that supports the arts through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Commission distributes grant awards to artists, arts and other not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, educators and local governments, and provides technical assistance in arts management.

For more information about the Virginia Commission for the Arts, or its programs and resources visit [www.arts.virginia.gov](http://www.arts.virginia.gov).

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