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**The Arkansas Arts Center announces \$128 million Campaign,
with commitments exceeding \$118 million to-date**

The project, designed by renowned architect Jeanne Gang and Studio Gang, will reimagine the Arkansas Arts Center for the 21st Century

Little Rock, AR, May 15, 2019 – The Arkansas Arts Center (AAC) is pleased to announce *Reimagining the Arkansas Arts Center: Campaign for Our Cultural Future*, a \$128 million special fundraising campaign that will realize a stunning new Arts Center for the 21st Century. The project will result in a comprehensive reenvisioning of the AAC by renowned architect **Jeanne Gang** and her practice, **Studio Gang**. The new AAC will include a revitalized landscape, designed by **Kate Orff** and **SCAPE**, which will expand the connection between the architecture and MacArthur Park. Both Jeanne Gang and Kate Orff are MacArthur fellows who have received prestigious MacArthur “Genius” grants. The Campaign will also provide transition and opening support, and endowment funds. Scheduled for completion in early 2022, the project will strengthen the Arkansas Arts Center as the region’s pre-eminent cultural and arts education institution for visual and performing arts.

At a special event on the evening of May 15, Campaign Co-Chairs Harriet and Warren Stephens announced that *Reimagining the Arkansas Arts Center: Campaign for Our Cultural Future* has raised \$118 million of its \$128 million goal to-date.

The campaign includes an early commitment of \$31,245,000 from the City of Little Rock, which is being generated through a hotel-tax revenue bond. Private fundraising for the project has nearly tripled the City’s commitment. Early lead support has come from many important partners, including:

- **Windgate Foundation, which has donated a lead campaign gift of \$35 million.** The Museum School will be named **Windgate Foundation Museum School** in honor of this inspirational gift. In addition, the Museum School Gallery, which will showcase student work, will be named the **Robyn and John Horn Museum School Gallery**. Robyn Horn is Windgate Foundation Board Chair. In tandem with Windgate Foundation’s commitment, two existing curatorial positions will

be named as follows: **Windgate Foundation Curator of Contemporary Craft** and the **Jackye and Curtis Finch Jr. Curator of Drawings**.

- **Harriet and Warren Stephens have made a transformational lead gift to the Campaign.** The new AAC Galleries, which showcase the permanent collection and house the special exhibition galleries, will be named the **Harriet and Warren Stephens Galleries** in their honor.
- **Winthrop Rockefeller Charitable Trust has made a lead gift of \$5 million.** Winthrop Rockefeller Charitable Trust has been a longstanding supporter of the Arkansas Arts Center.
- The Campaign has now garnered the early support of **twenty-one individuals and foundations, along with the State of Arkansas, who are contributing significant gifts of \$1 million or more** to the project. These families and institutions will be recognized as **21st Century Founders** for their tremendous generosity.
- **Additional families and foundations have contributed early leadership donations of \$100,000 or more**, and there are others who have made contributions, as well. Their participation is critical to the AAC's ability to reach an ambitious fundraising goal.

The announcement marks the beginning of the public phase of the Campaign, during which the Arkansas Arts Center plans to reach out to donors throughout the community, state and region to raise the remaining funds needed to meet the \$128 million campaign goal.

"The new Arkansas Arts Center will stand as a noted architectural treasure in the heart of Arkansas, serving even more young people and adults, and attracting visitors from throughout the city, state, region, and nation," said **Campaign Co-Chair Warren Stephens**. "The Campaign is an excellent example of the transformative power of a successful public/private partnership."

"A remarkable group has come together with a clear understanding of the importance of reimagining the Arkansas Arts Center for the 21st Century," said **Campaign Co-Chair Harriet Stephens**. "We will now reach out to the entire community and state for support to realize this once-in-a-lifetime project. Together, we can ensure that the Arkansas Arts Center is a thriving and influential cultural institution for present and future generations."

Donors to the project are supporting a design that features new spaces for gathering and community events, coupled with renovations to the existing building, to create dynamic new connections among the thriving education, exhibition, and theatre programs. New civic spaces will welcome visitors and community members alike, inviting them to explore the Center's impressive programs and collections in an exciting, energy-efficient, accessible, and state-of-the-art facility.

A two-story atrium will extend through the existing museum complex to weave together the Galleries, Museum School, and Children's Theatre. At the North end, a Cultural Living Room will act as a dynamic new community event and gathering space that will activate the building beyond business hours. A new visitor Entrance Hall will bring heightened importance to the historic 1937 Museum of Fine Arts facade. At the South end, a new restaurant will invite visitors into MacArthur Park, with shaded outdoor seating, new walking paths, a great lawn, and landscape features that work together with the new architecture to become the heartbeat of an enlivened neighborhood and city.

Off this new main axis, major renovations to the existing building will create a world-class visitor experience by amplifying the impact and accessibility of each of the Center's programs:

- State-of-the-art Galleries for the AAC's world-class collection and significant traveling exhibitions, and cutting-edge collection storage facilities to preserve and maintain the collection.
- Renovated facilities for the Museum School with increased education, amenity, and display spaces to improve the student experience and bring student work into visual dialogue with the collections on display elsewhere in the Arts Center.
- An updated Children's Theatre, which includes new lighting, sound and rigging systems, control rooms, audience seats, an expansion of the black box theatre, increased space for education programs, dressing rooms, and the scene shop, and the addition of a costume shop.

"Our design reimagines the Arkansas Arts Center to unlock new connections between an extraordinary art collection, thriving Museum School, and Children's Theatre," said **Jeanne Gang, Architect and Founder of Studio Gang**. "Along with much-needed renovations, new daylight spaces linked through the core of the Center will facilitate movement and create a series of vibrant, new public spaces for social interaction, education, and appreciation for the arts. Opening onto Crescent Drive and MacArthur Park, the new architecture will strengthen the relationship between the Arkansas Arts Center and the community."

The Arts Center plans for a fall 2019 groundbreaking. During construction, from Fall 2019 through its planned Grand Opening in early 2022, the AAC will relocate to the Riverdale Shopping Center at 2510 Cantrell Road in Little Rock. Museum School classes, programs and events will take place at the Riverdale Shopping Center location, and the Museum gift shop will be open. The Children's Theatre will also present performances at the Riverdale location, and will expand tours and performances throughout the state.

"We are so excited about the future of a reinvigorated Arkansas Arts Center - a Center with expanded exhibitions and programs that will serve even more patrons of all ages than ever before," said **Interim Executive Director Laine Harber**. "We'll need everyone's partnership and support during the transition and opening, and we look forward to working with the entire community and state on this amazing project!"

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About the Arkansas Arts Center - The Arkansas Arts Center is the state's premier center for visual and performing arts, with a renowned collection of regional, national and international art. The AAC also features the award-winning Children's Theatre, art classes and public programs. In addition, the AAC offers touring programs for communities, such as Children's Theatre on Tour, the Artmobile and traveling exhibitions.

About Studio Gang - Studio Gang is an architecture and urban design practice based in Chicago, with offices in New York, San Francisco, and Paris. Founded and led by MacArthur Fellow Jeanne Gang, Studio Gang's award-winning work ranges in scale and typology from the 82-story Aqua Tower to the 14-acre Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo, both located in Chicago. Gang has been recognized for a design

process that foregrounds the relationship between people and their environments, and is the only architect named to TIME Magazine's list of the 100 Most Influential People of 2019. Studio Gang is currently designing cultural and civic projects across the Americas, including an expansion to the American Museum of Natural History in New York, a new Center for the University of Chicago in Paris, a new United States Embassy in Brasilia, a unified campus for the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, and a Global Terminal and Concourse at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago. This is Studio Gang's first project in Arkansas.

About SCAPE – SCAPE, founded by landscape architect and MacArthur Fellow Kate Orff, is a design-driven landscape architecture and urban design studio based in New York. They believe landscape architecture can enable positive change in communities through the creation of regenerative living infrastructure and public landscapes. SCAPE works to integrate natural cycles and systems into environments across all scales, from the urban pocket-park to the regional ecological plan. They do this through diverse forms of landscape architecture – built landscapes, planning frameworks, research, books, and installations – with the ultimate goal of connecting people to their immediate environment and creating dynamic and adaptive landscapes of the future