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**The Arkansas Arts Center announces the appointment of
Dr. Victoria Ramirez as its new Executive Director**

Dr. Ramirez's leadership and vision will be key to fulfilling the promise of the reimagined Arkansas Arts Center, slated for completion in 2022

Little Rock, AR, August 13, 2019 – The Arkansas Arts Center (AAC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Victoria Ramirez as its new Executive Director. A visionary leader in the museum field, with more than 20 years of executive-level museum administration experience, Dr. Ramirez has led renovation projects, developed exhibitions and education programs, and launched programmatic and 21st century digital initiatives to increase museum attendance and participation. She has also played an integral role in many fundraising campaigns, securing support from significant national foundations and major corporations.

Dr. Ramirez will come directly to the Arkansas Arts Center from her position as Director of the El Paso Museum of Art (EPMA), a municipal museum in El Paso, Texas that serves community members of all ages. While at EPMA, she oversaw all aspects of museum administration, operations and programming, including a collection of more than 7,000 works, 12 annual exhibitions, and a robust art school. She led gallery renovation activities; oversaw strategic planning; expanded the art school; increased attendance, membership and student engagement; and worked closely with the EPMA Foundation Board on planning and fundraising initiatives. Under Dr. Ramirez's direction, the EPMA was awarded the prestigious Medal of Honor by the Institution for Museum and Library Services in recognition of dynamic programming and services.

Previously, Dr. Ramirez served as the Deputy Director of the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin Texas, where she oversaw a staff of 85 members and was responsible for all museum facilities, including permanent galleries, rotating exhibition spaces, two theatres, classrooms, café, store, and grounds. She was also the W.T. and Louise J. Moran Education Director at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, where she oversaw long-range planning and directed activities of the education department.

Dr. Ramirez holds an Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Houston, in Houston, Texas; a M.A. in Museum Education and Art History from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; and a B.A. in Art History from the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland. She is also a Member of the Task Force on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion in Museum Excellence for the American Alliance of Museums.

“We are truly honored to welcome Dr. Ramirez to the Arkansas Arts Center,” said **Merritt Dyke, President of the Arts Center Board of Trustees**. “Her deep experience in exhibitions, education, planning, and fundraising comes at the perfect time as we work to strengthen the Arkansas Arts Center as the regions’ premier center for the visual and performing arts. I’d like to offer my sincerest thanks to Laine Harber, our Chief Financial Officer, who has expertly served as the Interim Director of the Arts Center since August 2018.”

“The Arkansas Arts Center is a jewel for Little Rock and the region, and the project to re-envision the Arts Center will undoubtedly usher in the most expansive era in the institution’s history,” said **Dr. Victoria Ramirez**. “It is an honor and a privilege to be the new Executive Director during this transformative time. I am looking forward to working with the Arts Center’s Board, Foundation, staff, and Capital Campaign Co-Chairs Harriet and Warren Stephens to realize the vision for the new Art Center and launch its next, exciting chapter.”

“As we continue on our journey toward the Grand Opening of the reimagined Arkansas Arts Center in 2022, Dr. Ramirez is an ideal choice for Executive Director. The renovation project is grand in scope and impact, and her experience and vision will be central to fulfilling the promise of the new Arkansas Arts Center,” said **Campaign Co-Chair Warren Stephens**. “With the hiring of Dr. Ramirez, the Arts Center Board is reaffirming its commitment to the inspirational power and educational possibilities that art brings to the young people and adults in our city, state and region.”

The Arkansas Arts Center is currently conducting a \$128 million special fundraising campaign, ***Reimagining the Arkansas Arts Center: Campaign for Our Cultural Future***, that will realize a stunning new Arts Center for the 21st Century. The project will result in a complete reenvisioning of the AAC by renowned architect **Jeanne Gang** and her practice, **Studio Gang**. The new AAC will include a landscape design, by **Kate Orff** and **SCAPE**, which will expand the connection between the AAC facility and MacArthur Park. Both Jeanne Gang and Kate Orff are award-winning architects and MacArthur fellows who have received prestigious MacArthur “Genius” grants. The Campaign will also provide transition and opening support, and endowment funds.

During construction, the Arkansas Arts Center has moved from its current facility in MacArthur Park into a temporary location at the Riverdale Shopping Center at 2510 Cantrell Road in Little Rock. Classes, education programs and performances will continue at the temporary location from Fall 2019 through the new Arts Center’s planned Grand Opening in early 2022.

About the Arkansas Arts Center – The Arkansas Arts Center (AAC), located in Little Rock, AR, is the state’s premier center for visual and performing arts, with a world-class collection of more than 14,000 works of regional, national and international art. The AAC features the award-winning Children’s Theatre and popular Museum School, and offers a robust schedule of performances, art classes, special exhibitions, education and public programs, and events. The AAC also provides extensive touring programs in communities, including the Children’s Theatre on Tour, the Artmobile and traveling exhibitions. Through visitation and outreach, the AAC reaches more than 400,000 young people and adults each year. In addition to providing essential programs for the local community, the AAC receives visitors from throughout the state, region, nation and world.