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CHICAGO
ARCHITECTURE
CENTER

**CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE CENTER ANNOUNCES ELEANOR ESSER GORSKI AS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

*Named After a Rigorous National Search, Gorski Brings More Than 25 Years of Design and
Planning Expertise to the Role*

CHICAGO—The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), the leading organization devoted to celebrating and promoting Chicago as a center of architectural innovation and education, today announced that it has named Eleanor Esser Gorski as its next Chief Executive Officer. Gorski brings to the role more than 25 years in architecture, historic preservation and urban planning; a passion for design as a way to create equity; and a wealth of deep experience and knowledge of Chicago, including appointments to key city leadership roles under three mayoral administrations.

A Search Committee appointed by the CAC Board led a rigorous, national search in partnership with Koya Partners, the search firm that specializes in partnering with mission-driven clients. The search identified Gorski based on key qualities including a passion for the CAC's mission, outstanding business acumen, strategic and visionary leadership, and an ability to build culture, lead people and raise funds.

"After an extensive nationwide search, we are thrilled to welcome Eleanor Gorski to the Chicago Architecture Center and are excited to have her deep experience guide the organization into its next chapter," said **Ann Thompson, AIA, Board Chair of the CAC and Executive Vice President of Architecture and Design at Related Midwest**. "Eleanor shares our mission to inspire people to discover why design matters, and we are confident that she will further our vision of a world in which design is the engine that powers the growth of vibrant, equitable urban communities."

Gorski, a licensed architect, has centered her career around equity and community, seeking to integrate design, planning and historic preservation to the greatest benefit of the neighborhoods in which she has worked. She brings that focus to the CAC, the largest organization of its kind in the world, which serves more than 700,000 patrons annually, is one of the city's top cultural attractions and has cemented Chicago's stature as the "City of Architecture." The CAC is known for the nation's no. 1 architectural boat tour aboard "Chicago's First Lady."

“I am delighted to join the Chicago Architecture Center, an organization that has been a source of inspiration to me personally and professionally for decades,” said **Eleanor Gorski, incoming Chief Executive Officer of the CAC**. “I have worked throughout my career to deploy the power of design to positively impact the communities in which we live and work, and I look forward to working alongside the professionals and passionate docents who power this organization to expand the CAC’s impact on the hundreds of thousands of visitors, students and community members it reaches each year.”

Through workshops, programs, competitions and mentoring, CAC works with thousands of students and families to inspire them through the power of design. Each year, the organization directly engages nearly 15,000 children and families, hosts nearly 8,000 K-12 students on field trips, serves 7,500 visitors at the ArcelorMittal Design Studio and hosts 10,000 online learners at [DiscoverDesign.org](https://www.discoverdesign.org). Gorski brings a background in academia, program design and community engagement that will help to expand the CAC’s popular educational platforms.

Previously, Gorski served as Director of Design and Planning for the University of Illinois at Chicago. From 2017 to 2020, Gorski led the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) as a member of the leadership team culminating in her role as Acting Commissioner. She led work on the City’s Industrial Corridor Modernization Initiative and the Fulton Market Innovation District Plan, creating the fastest-growing commercial sector in the city. Gorski has held many other leadership roles within the City, including director of the Landmarks Commission for five years. Projects she has managed include the five-year renovation of Wrigley Field, the planning for the Obama Presidential Center, the renovation of most of the early skyscrapers in the Loop and the preservation of the Carson Pirie Scott State Street store (now Target).

Gorski’s notable projects at the City of Chicago include the creation of a community review process for the Chicago Plan Commission and numerous design guidelines for city landmark districts and neighborhoods. Her work in financial incentive legislation provided groundbreaking assistance for small businesses in communities of need through the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund and helped to preserve landmarks with the Class L tax incentive.

“Eleanor has extensive experience working with communities, municipalities and stakeholders to create community wealth,” said **Maurice Cox, Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development at the City of Chicago**. “Her understanding of the power of design, practical experience in the field and ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes uniquely positions her to lead an organization like the Chicago Architecture Center.”

In Gorski’s most recent role as Executive Director of the Cook County Land Bank Authority, she helped to grow the organization’s impact in alignment with the Land Bank’s mission to power community-driven economic development in disinvested communities throughout Cook County. She made possible the redevelopment of numerous residential and multifamily buildings and helped drive forward major deals like the redevelopment of Woodlawn’s Washington Park Bank and the CTA Red Line Extension Project. Under her leadership, the organization saw the

redevelopment of its 1,000th home and grew community wealth creation to \$156 million. A hallmark of Gorski's tenure was to develop and strengthen relationships with nonprofits, and in her role at CAC she will continue to build partnerships with like-minded organizations and change agents, such as the CCLBA and others.

Gorski is a fellow of the American Academy of Rome, where she studied the integration of new construction and old in Rome, Berlin and Amsterdam. During her career, Gorski has received widespread recognition, including the Rome Prize for Historic Preservation from the American Academy, AIA Chicago's Distinguished Service Award, the ULI Chicago Breakthrough Award, and recognition from C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group and Landmarks Illinois. She graduated Summa cum Laude from Penn State University where she double majored in Art History and History. She received her Master's in Architecture from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is also a fellow of the Civic Leadership Academy at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy. Gorski sits on the Local Advisory Board of LISC Chicago, Urban Land Institute Chicago board, the alumni board of the University of Illinois School of Architecture and the Board of the Illinois Medical District. She is a proud mom to two teenage boys and lives in Chicago.

About the Chicago Architecture Center

The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1966, dedicated to inspiring people to discover why design matters. A national leader in architecture and design education, the CAC offers tours, programs, exhibitions, and more that are part of a dynamic journey of lifelong learning. Opened to the public in 2018, its riverfront location is in the heart of the city, where Michigan Avenue meets the Chicago River, featuring nearly 10,000 square feet of exhibition space with views of a century of iconic skyscrapers. Through partnerships with schools and youth-serving organizations, the CAC reaches approximately 30,000 K-12 students annually, while teacher workshops provide educators with tools and resources they need to advance STEM curricula in their classrooms. Committed to serving under-represented communities in construction, engineering, and design professions, the CAC offers many of its education programs—and all of its programs for teens—at no cost to participants. CAC programs for adults and members include talks with acclaimed authors and practicing architects, in-depth presentations on issues and trends in urbanism, and classes unlocking subjects related to the built environment. Proceeds from programs, tours, and the CAC Design Store, as well as from grants, sponsorships, and donations, support its educational mission. Visit architecture.org to learn more and follow @chiarchitecture and #chiarchitecture on social media.

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