

Chicago Architecture Center Announces Departure of President/CEO Lynn Osmond After 25 Years of Service

(March 16, 2022) The [Chicago Architecture Center](#) (CAC) announces today the departure of President & CEO Lynn Osmond after 25 years of service, during which she transformed the organization into a global leader promoting Chicago's unique role as an architectural innovator and a singular destination for design savvy visitors from around the world. On April 29, Osmond departs the CAC to take the helm as President of Choose Chicago, the city's tourism agency.

"It was a tough decision but I'm excited about this new chapter as I prepare to lead Choose Chicago. I am proud of my 25 years at the Chicago Architecture Center, everything we accomplished and all the work we did to promote our great city and our unmatched architecture. This puts me in a strong position to continue to show the world why Chicago is consistently a top destination for local, national and international visitors," said Osmond.

The CAC experienced tremendous growth under Osmond's leadership as she built it into the largest organization of its kind in the world and cemented Chicago's stature as the "City of Architecture". Osmond was selected to lead the CAC (then Chicago Architecture Foundation) in 1996, when it was a \$2.4-million-dollar organization with an audience of 150,000, and by 2019 created a \$25 million organization with an audience of 700,000 patrons annually and one of the top cultural attractions in the city.

"Lynn has been a transformational leader for the Chicago Architecture Center. Her energy, vision and passion have resulted in the CAC becoming one of the top ten cultural institutions in the city and is recognized globally. She had the vision to create the Chicago Architecture Center, which is now a major attraction, Open House Chicago, a citywide free festival and expanded our youth education programs to reach underserved communities among a long list of other accomplishments. We're sorry to see her go but are excited Choose Chicago will be getting such a dynamic leader. As an active and long-time national hotel real estate investor, developer and manager, I am acutely aware of how vital this position is to the city and its economy, and I am confident Lynn and her team at Choose Chicago will deliver tangible results as Chicago continues its 'post-covid' comeback." Said John W. Rutledge, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Chicago Architecture Center and Founder, Chairman and CEO, Oxford Capital Group and Oxford Hotels and Resorts.

Osmond's accomplishments throughout her 25 years of service leaves the CAC prepared for continued success:

- In 2018, under Osmond's leadership the organization reinvented itself as a global design destination where visitors could discover the city's architectural legacy in the new 20,000 square-foot Center featuring the popular Chicago City Model with over 4,000 scale models of buildings in the city's iconic downtown. The CAC exhibition galleries were recently awarded the American Institute of Architects (AIA) National Design Award for Interior Architecture.
- In 2010, CAC launched Osmond's vision for Open House Chicago. Twelve years later, it is the most successful festival of its kind in North America and one of Chicago's top annual city-wide events.
- Osmond expanded the CAC's top tour, the Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise Aboard Chicago's First Lady, and strengthened the nonprofit's partnership with the family-owned Chicago's First Lady Cruises, the most luxurious fleet on the Chicago River. In 2021, the CAFC River Cruise was named #1 Boat tour in North America by USA Reader's Choice Awards.
- During her tenure, Osmond expanded and strengthened the organization's education programs. Overseeing the development of the nation's first high school textbook, *The Architecture Handbook*,

developed the K-8 curriculum *Schoolyards to Skylines*, the graphic novel *No Small Plans*, and founded the Teen Fellows and Girls Build! education programs.

- Osmond led the expansion of the Center's public programs from its new digitally enhanced, state-of-the-art Lecture Hall enabling events to go virtual during the pandemic while providing compelling content and programming for CAC's global audience.
- Through Osmond's impressive career she's made opportunity out of crisis having led the CAC during 9/11, the 2008 economic crisis and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the tough times her leadership kept the organization moving forward and ensured its success.

As part of the transition CAC's COO Juanna Blackwell will serve as interim leader while the Board of Trustees conducts a national search for the next president.

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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