

## MEDIA RELEASE

### New PCS Board Will Focus on Social Justice



**June 3, 2021 — PORTLAND, OR.** Portland Center Stage released a statement today from Stacey Caldwell Roberts, incoming board chair; Cynthia Fuhrman, managing director, and Marissa Wolf, artistic director:

At Portland Center Stage, our work and our art are rooted in the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). We are on a journey toward creating a more equitable theater, with an active anti-racist approach.

Therefore, on July 1, we will welcome a new slate of board members to join the PCS board. This new slate will include the following individuals: Jennifer Lanier, Susannah

Mars, DeLanna Studi, and Mari Watanabe. Stacey Caldwell Roberts will be named the board chair, and the remaining members of the board are Shelli Romero, board secretary, and Gustavo Cruz, board treasurer. Board member bios are below.

This new board will focus on supporting the company's strong social justice vision, including allowing for a new, radical structural reinvention that aligns with PCS values, vision, and mission. This is a moment of excitement for PCS as we take powerful steps toward organization-wide transforming and restructuring. Read more about our commitments [here](#). We are thankful for all who have served our organization.

## BOARD OFFICERS



### **Stacey Caldwell Roberts, Board Chair**

Stacey was born and raised in Portland. She attended U.S. Grant High School and received her bachelor's degree from Lewis & Clark College. She now resides in Ridgefield, Washington, with her husband and three children. They run a working farm, raising beef cattle and running a horse boarding facility. Stacey has worked in the insurance industry, specifically claims management, for 26 years and is currently employed as a consultant with a large, international insurance firm. Stacey is a past employee of Portland Center Stage, where she worked as a house manager for 10 years and spent three years as a marketing associate. Stacey is active in her community, having served as a member of the board of alumni at Lewis & Clark College. She spent years volunteering at her children's school and at Portland Center Stage.



### **Shelli Romero, Board Secretary**

Shelli's more than 24-years of professional experience combines public policy and administration, government and public affairs, strategic communications, project, people, and program management and oversight, public involvement, career coaching, development, and exploration, strategic positioning, strategic planning, plain language writing, storytelling, writing profiles and biographies, marketing, public speaking, media experience, event coordination, and master networking. She has worked at the federal, state, city, and county levels of government and has served on the staff for three elected officials and worked for two nonprofit organizations. She is immersed in public policy, politics, public service/sector work and management, administration, and owns a career coaching and communications firm, Rose City Chica. Shelli was raised on the picket line by educator-activist parents, advocating for farmworkers rights as a girl in rural, suburban, and urban Oregon. She was named Women Transportation Seminar, Portland Chapter, Woman of the Year in 2018, and she joined the Portland Center Stage board in September of 2019.



### **Gustavo Cruz, Board Treasurer**

Gustavo (Tavo) is a partner with Hathaway Larson LLP and practices business transactions law. His experience includes commercial and corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, and general corporate matters for financial institutions, companies, and individuals. Tavo served as a partner in an AMLAW 100 firm, as well as in-house counsel with a large financial institution. Tavo was born and raised in Portland and attended Santa Clara University, the University of Oregon, and Lewis and Clark Law School. He has served on numerous boards and committees, and is the current board Chair for Prosper Portland, formerly known as the Portland Development Commission.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS



### **Jennifer Lanier**

#### **Co-Artistic Director of Original Practice Shakespeare Actor**

Jennifer is a co-artistic director of Original Practice Shakespeare Festival. Local credits: *Redwood* at Portland Center Stage, *Well* and *Let Me Down Easy* at Profile Theatre; *Men on Boats* at Third Rail Repertory Theatre; *The Brother/Sister Plays* at Portland Playhouse; *The Hillsboro Story* at Artists Repertory Theatre. Her solo show *None of the Above* has been seen around the country. Regional: American Stage Theatre Company, Ruth Foreman Theatre, United Stage. Film: *The Water Man*, *Thin Skin*, *Woodstock or Bust*, *Last Champion*, *Scrapper*. TV: *Leverage*, *Grimm*, *Hawaii*. She earned a B.F.A. from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and has studied improvisation with Paul Sills, original director of The Second City.



### **Susannah Mars**

#### **Actor, Podcast Producer/Host**

Favorite roles at Portland Center Stage include Rona Lisa Peretti in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Mother in *Ragtime*, Mama Rose in *Gypsy*, and Merideth in *Bat Boy*. At Artists Repertory Theatre, she performed *Mars On Life* for three seasons and also appeared as Dinah in *The Quality of Life*, Julia in *Holidazed*, Becca in *Rabbit Hole*, Mabel in *Chaps*, and Karen in *Dinner with Friends*. Also at Artists Rep, she was Mary Todd Lincoln in *A Civil War Christmas*. She was Frieda and Betty at Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre in *Sunday in the Park with George* and Susan in their production of *Company*. Maybe you saw her on NBC's *Grimm* as Drew Wu's psychiatrist, Dr. Richet. Susannah is a resident artist at

Artists Rep and the recipient of six Portland Drama Critics Awards and two Portland Area Music Theatre Awards. Her recordings, *Susannah Mars*, *Call It Home*; *The Music of Richard Gray* and the MAC-nominated *Take Me To The World* are available on iTunes, where you can also subscribe to her podcast, Adventures in Artslandia. Proud member of AEA.



## **DeLanna Studi**

### **Artistic Director of Native Voices at the Autry**

#### **Actor/Writer**

DeLanna is a proud citizen of the Cherokee Nation and is honored to be the new artistic director of Native Voices at the Autry. She has more than 25 years of experience as a performer, storyteller, educator, facilitator, advocate, and activist. Her theater credits include the First National Broadway Tour of Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning play *August: Osage County*, Off-Broadway's *Gloria: A Life* at the Daryl Roth Theatre, *Informed Consent* at the Duke Theater on 42nd Street, and regional theaters (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage, Cornerstone, and Indiana Repertory Theater). DeLanna originated roles in more than 18 world premieres, including 14 Native productions. A pivotal moment in her career was writing and performing *And So We Walked: An Artist's Journey Along the Trail of Tears*, based on retracing her family's footsteps along the Trail of Tears with her father. *And So We Walked* has been produced throughout the country and was the first American play chosen for the Journees Theatrales de Carthage in Tunisia, Africa. In film and television, DeLanna can be seen in the Peabody Award-winning *Edge of America*, Hallmark's *Dreamkeeper*, *Goliath*, *Shameless*, and *General Hospital*. She is a recipient of the Butcher Scholar Award, MAP Fund Grant, and Cherokee Preservation Grant. DeLanna has been a part of residencies and workshops at various universities and organizations, including Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program, Brown University/Trinity Repertory Theater, Dartmouth College/Hopkins Center, University of Wisconsin: Green Bay, University of Wisconsin: Madison, Arizona State University,



Gonzaga University, University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, and Museum of the Cherokee Indian. Since 2007, she has served as the chair of the SAG-AFTRA National Native Americans Committee.



**Mari Watanabe**

**Executive Director of Partners in Diversity**

Mari has been the executive director of Partners in Diversity since 2012. She oversees all aspects of this nonprofit, whose mission is to help employers diversify their workforce in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Up until November 2019, Mari split her time between Partners in Diversity and

Leadership Portland, a 10-month civic engagement leadership program operated by the Portland Business Alliance. Prior to joining the Alliance, Mari was in the apparel arena for many years, working for corporations such as Nike, Nordstrom, and Union Bay Sportswear, before switching to the nonprofit sector. She was the first executive director of Oregon Nikkei Endowment, a Japanese American history and culture organization. In May, 2011, Mari was appointed by Governor John Kitzhaber to serve on the Oregon Commission for Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs under the umbrella of the Oregon Advocacy Commission. She served for four years as vice-chair and her final two years as chairperson, to help create policies that support the Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Mari has a diversity and inclusion certificate from Cornell University and an undergraduate degree from Washington State University in fashion merchandising. Raised in Seattle, Mari moved to Portland in 2000.

**PORTLAND CENTER STAGE**

[Portland Center Stage](#) is among the top 20 regional theaters in the country.

Established in 1988 as a branch of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Marissa Wolf and Managing Director Cynthia Fuhrman, the company produces a mix of classic, contemporary, and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality

education and community programs. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 28 world premieres, many of which were developed at its new works festival, JAW. Portland Center Stage's home is at The Armory, a historic building originally constructed in 1891. After a major renovation, The Armory opened in 2006 as the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue in the country, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

**Portland Center Stage is committed to identifying and interrupting instances of racism and all forms of oppression, through the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). Learn more at [pcs.org/idea](https://pcs.org/idea).**

Portland Center Stage's 2020-2021 season is funded in part by Season Superstars the Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank and the Regional Arts and Culture Council. Further support comes from Mary and Don Blair; Tim and Mary Boyle; the Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts; and US Bank.

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