



Press Release

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FOR RELEASE:

April 20, 2022

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
appoints**

**STACEY JOHNSON**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

**ASWATHI ZACHARIAH**  
**General Counsel**



(WASHINGTON)—The Kennedy Center today announced that **Stacey Johnson** has been appointed Chief Financial Officer, beginning May 2, 2022, and **Aswathi Zachariah** has joined the Center as its General Counsel, effective April 18, 2022. Reporting to Chief Administrative Officer, Barbara Polk, Johnson joins the Administrative Services group, which includes Information Technology and Human Resources, where she will be an integral member of the Center’s leadership team, responsible for the management of the financial operations of the Kennedy Center. Working closely with President Deborah F. Rutter and in collaboration with the Kennedy Center’s senior staff, Zachariah will oversee and direct the legal and related business affairs of the Kennedy Center, the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington National Opera, and their respective affiliated entities.

“Stacey and Aswathi join us at a pivotal moment for the Kennedy Center, as we enter our second half-century and a changing landscape presents new challenges and opportunities,” said President Deborah F. Rutter. “Both of these remarkable women bring the significant depth of experience, creativity, and fresh perspective to meet this moment head-on as they assume these vital leadership roles that are so critical to our business.”

“I am both honored and humbled to join the Kennedy Center as its Chief Financial Officer. The Kennedy Center’s values and phenomenal work in arts and education matter dearly to me and my family, lifting communities with the joyful connectedness and inspiration needed at this extraordinary time of crisis and pain around the world. I look forward to sharing my fiscal management expertise and organizational

development experience in collaboration with a team that is highly regarded for its commitment to excellence and service to global audiences,” commented Stacey Johnson.

Aswathi Zachariah said, “I am thrilled to join the Kennedy Center, a very special place rooted in honoring JFK through the power of the arts and connecting cultures. I know from personal experience how incredibly impactful access to and engagement with the arts can be in helping us tap into our creative capacities, foster innovation, and build bridges. I look forward to collaborating with the Kennedy Center’s talented and dedicated staff who are passionate about what they do and deeply committed to amplifying the arts across the diverse communities we serve.”

**Stacey Johnson** comes to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) role at the Kennedy Center with more than 20 years of experience and a proven record of accomplishment in directing business operations with outstanding analytical skills, sound judgement, critical thinking, creativity, and accountability. From 2017 until joining the Center, she served as CFO for the American Federation of Teachers, where she was transformative in transitioning the organization to remote business operations and improving financial oversight and management. Prior to that, Johnson held the CFO position for Alexandria City Public Schools, where her work garnered distinguished awards from national associations.

**Aswathi Zachariah** takes on the Center’s General Counsel position with deep experience guiding legal matters across a diverse range of organizations. Before the Kennedy Center, Zachariah served as General Counsel for the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), a U.S. federal agency that supports community-led development in Latin America and the Caribbean through grant-making, technical assistance, and public-private partnerships. Prior to joining IAF, she was an Associate General Counsel for the National Endowment for the Arts. Zachariah also practiced real estate law at the D.C. law firm, Arent Fox Schiff for a number of years where her focus was real estate and corporate transactional law. She is also a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and spent three years in the audit practice at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

### **About the Kennedy Center**

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America’s living memorial to President John F. Kennedy and the nation’s cultural center. Under the guidance of Chairman [David M. Rubenstein](#) and President [Deborah F. Rutter](#), the combined 19 theaters, stages, and spaces make the Kennedy Center one of the nation’s busiest performing arts campuses attracting more than three million audience members and visitors each year to more than 2,000 performances, events, and exhibits.

Now celebrating its 50th Anniversary, the Kennedy Center—along with its artistic affiliates, the [National Symphony Orchestra](#) and [Washington National Opera](#)—produces and presents music, dance, and theater, balancing classical art forms with artists and creators in contemporary genres such as comedy, jazz, and Hip Hop. Nationally and internationally, more than 260 million people each year experience the Kennedy Center through digital streaming initiatives, and broadcasts, including the Center’s Emmy® Award-winning [The Kennedy Center Honors](#), broadcast annually on CBS, and Emmy-nominated [The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize](#), which airs annually on PBS.

The breadth of the Kennedy Center’s education initiatives is unparalleled, with customized experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds, across all 50 states, 29 countries, and globally through its online resources. Through programs such as Performances for Young Audiences, *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child*, Turnaround Arts, and intensive professional development for educators, the Kennedy Center impacts more than 1.4 million students each year.

Expanding on long-standing work across artistic, educational, and community programs for many years, the Center unveiled in July of 2020 long-term [Social Impact Initiatives](#) to support anti-racism within the Nation’s Cultural Center and across the performing arts. The Initiative includes an eight-channel framework that will be prioritized, pursued, and woven throughout the institution.

On September 7, 2019, the Kennedy Center inaugurated the REACH, its first-ever major expansion. Designed by Steven Holl Associates as a complement to the original, iconic Edward Durell Stone building, the REACH provides visitors with new opportunities to interact and engage with the Center as the nation's premier nexus of arts, learning, and culture.

Across all its offerings, the Kennedy Center is committed to increasing accessible, inclusive opportunities for all people to participate in, learn about, and learn through the arts. The Center stages more than 400 free performances each year and offers a variety of [Specially Priced Ticket](#) programs for students, seniors, persons with disabilities, and others with fixed low incomes.

To learn more about the Kennedy Center, please visit [www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org).

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