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North Dakota Council on the Arts Announces New Executive Director

Bismarck, ND – Following an extensive nationwide search, the North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA) is pleased to announce that Dr. Beth Gigante Klingenstein has been selected as the new executive director effective July 7, 2014. Klingenstein will be replacing Janine Webb who has served in this capacity since July of 2000.

"I am honored to be selected for this position. I have worked in arts advocacy my whole life and look forward to serving the citizens of North Dakota as a representative on the state, regional, and national levels. I have seen how the arts in North Dakota have contributed to the education of our youth, personal fulfillment of our citizens, and quality of life and economic growth within our communities. I look forward to working with the staff and board of the North Dakota Council on the Arts, as well as with artists within the state and region, to do all that I can for the arts in our state," said Mrs. Klingenstein.

Klingenstein maintained an independent music studio for 28 years before moving to Valley City, North Dakota where she served as a Professor of Music at Valley City State University. Klingenstein has served as a community leader in arts advocacy throughout her career. As the Founding Director of the VCSU Community School of the Arts, she initiated a number of community arts programs including a community orchestra, an annual chamber music festival, a women’s choir, a children’s choir, art classes, and a literary magazine. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Piano Performance from Syracuse University, a Master’s degree in Piano Performance from the University of Michigan, and a PhD in Educational Leadership from the University of North Dakota.

“When Jan informed us a year ago that she would be retiring in 2014 we knew the task ahead to replace her was not going to be an easy one. Jan had a way of connecting with organizations and staff that was going to be difficult to find in a new director. But we feel we have found that person who has the background and ability to carry on the excellence in Klingenstein,” said David “White Thunder” Trottier, Chairman of the NDCA. “It was certainly a difficult task but we had an excellent field of candidates to choose from. Beth’s exceptional education and background in the arts, her passion for the arts, and the ease in which she communicates with people all came to light in her interview.” Trottier went on to say, “I am highly confident that the Executive Committee and the Council have made the right choice in Klingenstein for this position.”

Klingenstein has worked with NDCA on numerous occasions. She received the North Dakota Governor’s Award for the Arts in 2007, served on the Leadership Circle for Arts North Dakota from 2008-2010, served on the North Dakota Arts Education Task Force from 2002-2006, and was a member of the NDCA Evaluation Committee for Arts in Education grants in 1998-1999. She was awarded a...
number of grants from the NDCA, including Special Projects, Community Arts Access, and a Technology grant.

Klingenstein has given over 140 presentations for professional organizations in 25 states and the District of Columbia, including 35 at national conferences such as the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, Association for Technology in Music Instruction, College Music Society, National Symposium on Music Instruction Technology, National Piano Foundation, National Conference on Ubiquitous Computing, Beyond Boundaries: Integrating Technology into Teaching & Learning, and numerous presentations for Music Teachers National Association. Over the last twenty years, she has written over forty successful grants, offering diverse benefits such as bringing artists to Valley City, offering Kindermusik to special needs preschoolers, and providing string instruments to elementary school children.


Her husband, Kal, is a pharmacist with Thrifty White Pharmacy. They have two children, both married and currently living in Denver. Son Max is a practicing dentist at Mountain Dental, and daughter Emma is completing her first year of a family medicine residency at Rose Medical Center Hospital.

About the North Dakota Council on the Arts

The NDCA operates with an approximate annual budget of $1 million through the support of the National Endowment for the Arts and an appropriation from the North Dakota State Legislature. Over 75 percent of the NDCA budget is awarded to organizations and individuals through its various grant programs. In addition to the grant programs, the NDCA also supports the State Tree Lighting Ceremony each December, a biennial State Arts Conference, and the biennial Governor’s Awards for the Arts. The NDCA partners with a variety of state agencies and non-profit organizations throughout the state in the presentation and support of arts-related programs.

It is NDCA’s mission to promote, preserve, and perpetuate the arts in North Dakota. NDCA's promise is to use the power of the arts to enhance the vitality of North Dakota through: Cultural Traditions in North Dakota; Pre K-12 Academic Success; Accessibility for All Citizens; Economic Development; Quality Art Experiences; and to Support Artists and Arts Organizations. For more information on NDCA visit http://www.nd.gov/arts.

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The North Dakota Council on the Arts is the state agency responsible for the support and development of the arts throughout North Dakota, and is funded by the state legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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