

MEDIA RELEASE
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**DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Veteran Nonprofit Leader Samantha Turner To Succeed DCT Co-Founder Robyn Flatt effective June 12.**

(DALLAS, TX) – Dallas Children's Theater (DCT) Board of Trustees President Jim Markus announced today that Samantha Turner has become Dallas Children's Theater's Executive Director, effective June 12, 2023. Turner joins DCT after leading Ballet Arizona for six years.

Turner was introduced at Wednesday's DCT board meeting at the Rosewood Center for Family Arts where she shared her excitement and vision for the future of DCT.

"I am honored to be a part of this storied and nationally-recognized organization of artists that has been providing the highest levels of professional theater to children, families and students for four decades," Turner stated. "What Robyn has built here is an integral part of the Dallas arts and education landscape, and I am excited to get to know this thriving community of theater enthusiasts and to build on the success that is so evident at DCT."

Turner, who made Dallas her home earlier this year, starts on June 12th as DCT is serving thousands of students in their popular summer camps and will be a part of the continued planning for DCT's 40th season.

Markus stated, "We are thrilled to begin this new chapter in DCT's history. The Board of Trustees and DCT Staff welcome Samantha Turner, who is joining us as we launch our landmark 40th season. As we completed our 22-23 season with a sold-out run of CHARLOTTE'S WEB and head into another summer teeming with young students in our Academy summer camps, DCT's mission and role in the community are relevant now more than ever."

Markus continued, "The Search Committee was highly impressed with Samantha's business acumen as well as her understanding of the dynamics associated with a performing arts organization. After a very thorough nine-month process, we are pleased to have such a strong leader inherit the leadership responsibility from our founder, Robyn Flatt."

Co-Founder and longtime Executive Director, Robyn Flatt, applauds her successor as well, "Samantha's 20 years of business leadership experience and her dedication to understanding the arts in an immersive way led Ballet Arizona through the COVID-19 pandemic and on to record growth during her tenure. It is clear she is exactly the right choice to lead DCT into this next chapter. We are profoundly fortunate Samantha has come our way."

Flatt, who co-founded and led DCT for 40 years, plans to continue to direct specific projects of national significance, writing arts-based curriculum, and will take on special projects for Dallas Children's Theater. She intends to devote much of her creative energy to a book and film about her father, Paul Baker, through the nationally-oriented Baker Idea Institute, a DCT incubator initiative for creative thinking and imagination in ways that benefit business, education, and individuals in general.

Founded in 1984, Dallas Children's Theater features professional actors performing for an annual audience of 150,000 young people and their families through mainstage productions and an arts-in-education program. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing solely on youth and family theater, DCT builds bridges of understanding between generations and cultures, instilling an early appreciation of literature, art, and the performing arts in tomorrow's artists and patrons.



Samantha Turner is a leader in both the non-profit and corporate sectors with expertise in performing arts administration, business management, and marketing. In June 2023, she was named Executive Director for Dallas Children's Theater after serving as Executive Director for Ballet Arizona for six years. During her tenure, the professional ballet company achieved its greatest levels of financial health and creative expression. Before Samantha was appointed Executive Director, she served three years as Ballet

Arizona's Director of Marketing, achieving record earned revenue for several productions.

Prior to joining Ballet Arizona, Samantha held leadership roles in both non-profit and Fortune 500 companies. She served as Head of Business Operations and Finance for CAP21, a New York-based musical theatre conservatory and theatre company. Samantha moved into that role after a year-long sabbatical immersed in acting, singing, and dance training that allowed her to gain a deep understanding of the arts and artists. She integrated those insights with her 20 years of Fortune 500 leadership experience to transition to a career focused on the strategic management of arts organizations.

Samantha's for-profit career includes high-level marketing and business management roles at Aflac, Assurant, and other organizations of national and regional scope. In addition to her professional experience, Samantha holds MBAs in marketing and international business/ecommerce, and an undergraduate degree in broadcast journalism.



Robyn Flatt co-founded DCT in 1984. Under her artistic leadership, the theater's creative and operational stature has grown over the past 39 years to reflect its current annual budget of more than \$4 million. During her tenure as a member of the Dallas Theater Center Resident Company, she served as Assistant Artistic Director, director of Mimeact and Theater-in-the-Parks, and was on the Graduate faculty for 24 years. She holds an MA Degree from Baylor University and her directing credits include many major titles in the youth theater canon as well as acclaimed world premiere productions commissioned by DCT. Ms. Flatt has served on the boards of AATE and ASSITEJ/USA and is a recipient of the 2006 *Center for Nonprofit Management Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership*, The

500, Inc.'s prestigious *Ken Bryant Visionary Award*, Dallas Historical Society's 1999 *Excellence in*

Community Service for Creative Arts, the *2002 Leon Rabin Standing Ovation Award*, and the *YWCA Centennial Award*. Ms. Flatt has also been inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Theater and served as treasurer of the Children's Theatre Foundation of America from 2009 - 2014. She received Northwood University's 2011 Distinguished Women's Award and was nominated by *The Dallas Morning News* arts staff for the Texan of the Year Award in both 2010 and 2015. Robyn was honored in 2016 with the Orlin Corey Award for Artistic Excellence from the American Alliance for Theater and Education.

In 2023 Robyn received the *Jac Alder Award* Recognizing Effective and Inclusive Arts Advocacy. Further in 2023, Robyn was honored at the Dallas Theater Center's 2023 Gala. Kevin Moriarty, DTC's Executive Director said, "We are thrilled to honor Robyn Flatt with the *Linda and Bill Custard Award*, in recognition of her many years of transformational artistry at DTC and at Dallas Children's Theater.

Ms. Flatt has been an integral part of Dallas's arts community for 63 years. On June 12, 2023, Ms. Flatt transitioned to Founder to continue her projects of national significance.

Season Sponsors are: Texas Instruments, City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, March Family Foundation, The Carlson Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Lyda Hill Philanthropies, TACA, and CARES Act/American Rescue Plan. General Sponsors Include: Hearst Foundations, The Rosewood Corporation, The Holloway Family Foundation, The M.R. and Evelyn Hudson Foundation, The Theodore and Beulah Beasley Foundation, Inc., Harold Simmons Foundation, Sharron Hunt, Lara and Stephen Harrison, and the Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation. Additional Support is Provided By: Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District, TXU Energy, Frost Bank, Joan Becker, Capital for Kids, Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, The Koz Foundation, Stephen M. Seay Foundation, Margot B. Perot, Maintenance Inc., Central Market, and Green Mountain Energy, DCT's official renewable energy partner. Sensory-Friendly Sponsors Include: Fichtenbaum Charitable Trust. Building Fund Supported By: The Carlson Foundation, The March Family Foundation, Laurie Sands Harrison, The Rosewood Corporation, Anonymous Family, Elizabeth & Bart Showalter, Karen & Ken Travis, The Hersh Foundation, and Everett & Becky Spaeth.

About Dallas Children's Theater

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