

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 15, 2019

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NASAA Welcomes New 2020 Board Chair and Directors

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is pleased to announce the election of a new chair and five new members to its board of directors. As part of a rigorous national nomination process, state arts agencies elected these exemplary leaders at the NASAA 2019 Leadership Institute in Providence, Rhode Island. The new chair, Suzanne Wise of Nebraska, will serve a two-year term. Three new members drawn from the state arts agency field each will serve a three-year term, and two new at-large members each will serve a two-year term.

Suzanne Wise Executive Director, Nebraska Arts Council



As executive director, Suzanne Wise is the [Nebraska Arts Council's](#) CEO, representing the agency at the state, regional and national levels. She works with the Arts Council board to attain agency goals and objectives and responds to the needs of the state's arts community through financial support, services and advocacy. Wise works with the Nebraska Cultural Endowment in developing financial resources for the arts and humanities. Her career at the Arts Council began in 1988. She served as the public art program administrator and managed special initiatives and numerous grant programs for the agency. She has served on many boards both in Nebraska and nationally, including Mid-America Arts Alliance and NASAA. Wise holds an M.A. in art history from the University of Kansas, with a specialization in 19th- and 20th-century American painting and photography, and a B.A. in art history from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Previously, she held curatorial positions at Sheldon Art Museum, Joslyn Art Museum and Northwestern University's Block Gallery, and has taught at Creighton University and in the University of Nebraska system. Wise was awarded an Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award in 1998 from University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Alumni Association board of directors. In 2018, she received NASAA's Gary Young Award for her significant contributions to public support for the arts at the state, regional and national levels. (Board term 2015-2021)

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Karl Blischke
Executive Director, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts



Karl Blischke became executive director of the [Pennsylvania Council on the Arts](#) in 2018. He has held a variety of senior level public-sector positions and has more than 16 years of hands-on experience and overall managerial responsibility, promoting vibrant and prosperous communities through cultural and economic development. In Pennsylvania, Blischke previously served on the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, directing its Arts in Education and Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts programs, which provide unprecedented access to arts funding and technical assistance for the creative industry in the commonwealth's 67 counties. In Florida, Blischke joined the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development, where he was responsible for promoting job creation and community development in the state's rural communities, and directing programs aimed at increasing access to capital for small businesses. Following this work, Blischke was named director of strategic business development for the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, focusing on the state's efforts to diversify its economy and business attraction, expansion and retention. (Board term: 2020-2022)

Mary V. Bordeaux
Vice President of Programs and Operations, First Peoples Fund



Mary Bordeaux serves as [First Peoples Fund](#)'s vice president. She is the co-owner and creative director of Racing Magpie, a collaborative space with a Native art gallery and artist studios in downtown Rapid City, South Dakota. She received her bachelor's degree from the Institute of American Indian Arts and her M.F.A. from the University of the Arts; both degrees are in museum studies with an emphasis in exhibition design and planning. Bordeaux is currently working on her educational doctorate at Saint Mary's University, exploring Lakota epistemology. She has held curatorial positions with The Heritage Center at Red Cloud Indian School and The Indian Museum of North America at Crazy Horse Memorial. Bordeaux is the vice chairperson for the [South Dakota Arts Council](#). (Board term: 2020-2021)

Karen Hanan
Executive Director, ArtsWA



Karen Hanan is a senior executive with 20+ years of success providing leadership and managerial direction to state and regional arts service and presenting organizations. She was appointed executive director of [ArtsWA](#) by Gov. Jay Inslee in 2014. As the agency's head, Hanan's role is to grow the organization's capacity, services and potential for positively impacting the arts field, arts in education and the state. Previously, Hanan was executive director of Arts Northwest, the regional service organization for performing arts organizations, arts presenters, artists, agents and associated organizations. During her tenure there, Hanan was the driving force in repositioning the nonprofit for growth, artistic vitality, profitability and a commitment to mission. She achieved this through effective planning, vision, partnership building and operational savvy. She oversaw the doubling of the organization's membership and its budget. Prior to her tenure with Arts Northwest, Hanan was the founder and executive director of the Juan de Fuca Festival of the Arts. She is a well-respected member of a number of industry organizations and sits on several boards of directors. She enjoys opportunities to be a speaker, panelist or event participant where the focus is an arts related topic or the creative economy. (Board term: 2020-2022)

Gene Meneray
Council Member, Louisiana State Arts Council



Gene Meneray is cofounder of The Ella Project, a pro bono legal, business development and cultural advocacy organization. A native New Orleanian and graduate of Tulane University, Meneray worked for more than a decade as director of artist services at the Arts Council of New Orleans. He also has worked for Thomas Mann Design and for Young Aspirations/Young Artists (YAYA). Meneray has served multiple times as a grant reviewer for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Louisiana Division of the Arts, and as a juror for the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Festival Internationale de Louisiane, and numerous other art shows and festivals. From 2011-2017, he taught arts business in the graduate school at the University of New Orleans Arts Administration program. He has been a panelist and moderator for events including the World Cultural Economic Forum, American Bar Association Conference on Pro Bono, the Music Cities Summit in Toronto and the Sociable City Summit. Meneray is the director of the Louisiana Crafts Guild and serves on the [Louisiana State Arts Council](#). (Board term: 2020-2022)

Ivonne Chand O'Neal
Principal, MUSE Research



Ivonne Chand O'Neal, Ph.D., is the founder and principal of MUSE Research, LLC, a creativity and arts impact research firm that provides arts impact assessment, research design and arts evaluation services for multinational companies, community and government development programs, and educational institutions. She currently serves as chief research strategist for Crayola and is senior research fellow for Creativity Testing Services, a creativity assessment firm examining creativity with such organizations as Red Bull, Lego and Disney. Prior to her current position, O'Neal served as founding director of research and evaluation for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where she created the center's first comprehensive research agenda of more than 25 studies designed to examine the impact of the arts on society on local, national and international scales. She currently serves as the cochair for the Arts, Culture and Museums Division of the American Evaluation Association; serves on the Editorial Board for the *Creativity Research Journal*, the Research Advisory Board for the University of Pennsylvania's Human Flourishing Initiative and the AP Research Development Committee for the College Board; and has worked actively with the entertainment industry (Disney, NBC, TNBC) to increase creative thinking skills in educational television programs for children and teens. (Board term: 2020-2021)

In addition to these new directors, Amber Sharples, executive director of the Oklahoma Arts Council, was elected to a second three-year term.

"We are delighted that the membership has elected Suzanne as our chair," said NASAA President and CEO Pam Breaux. "We heartily welcome Karl, Mary, Karen, Gene and Ivonne to the NASAA board, and are pleased that Amber will continue her service. These experienced leaders bring a breadth of knowledge, strong commitments to serving the public and a sincere passion for the arts. We are eager to work with this new team and we welcome their expertise and guidance."

Per NASAA's bylaws, the board elected these officers:

1st Vice Chair: Omari Rush, Chair, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs
2nd Vice Chair: Amber Sharples, Executive Director, Oklahoma Arts Council
Secretary: Stephanie Conner, Council Member, Tennessee Arts Commission
Treasurer: Karen Paty, Executive Director, Georgia Council for the Arts

"The 2020 NASAA board represents strong and committed leadership from state arts agencies and the wider arts and culture field," said NASAA Chair Suzanne Wise. "I am excited to work with these outstanding leaders as we advance NASAA's mission to strengthen state arts agencies and continue to advocate for the value of the arts across all communities."

For more information on NASAA's board members, visit [NASAA Board of Directors](#).

The **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies** is the nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization that unites, represents and serves the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies. Founded in 1968, NASAA represents their individual and collective interests, empowers their work through knowledge, and advances the arts as an essential public benefit. To learn more about NASAA and state arts agencies, visit nasaa-arts.org.