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CONTACT: Chelsea Holmes
Program Manager
Business Council for the Arts
704.890.2318 (C)
chelsea.holmes@ntbca.org

LEADERSHIP ARTS INSTITUTE CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATES 39 ARTS & BUSINESS LEADERS

DALLAS—Thirty-nine young Dallas professionals graduated in virtual ceremonies May 12 honoring the Class of 2020 of the Business Council for the Arts' (BCA) Leadership Arts Institute (LAI). For 32 years the Institute has been training emerging to accomplished business professionals in leadership, nonprofit board best practices, and knowledge of critical issues affecting arts and cultural institutions throughout North Texas.

The Institute was founded by the late Dallas philanthropist and global art collector Raymond D. Nasher, NorthPark Center developer who believed “every company has a special responsibility to enrich the lives of its community. It should serve as a catalyst to link art and business for the benefit of all.”

Raising More Than \$30,000 to Benefit Homeless DISD Students

LAI classes meet for nine months. During that time they raise money to fund a community arts project, as well as attend lectures and events at arts and cultural venues around Dallas. The 2020 LAI class chose as its project fund-raising and hands-on support to improve living facilities at the Fannie C. Harris Youth Center near Fair Park. Class members joined After8ToEducate to create opportunities for artistic expression and emotional support for homeless DISD high school students. The outcome included installation of a podcast studio and related programming for the residents’ self-expression, an art corner for personal art projects, and inspiring art to enliven the Harris Youth Center’s space.

Visiting Dallas Arts & Cultural Venues

In addition to their group project, LAI class members heard more than 38 speakers on arts and business-related topics. They also toured eight Dallas-area arts venues, including: Nasher Sculpture Center, Kessler Theater, Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Latino Cultural Center, Meadows Conference Center, Crow Museum of Asian Art, and the Cedars Union.

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Learning Opportunities Uniting Business & the Arts

LAI participant Antonio Carr of American Airlines summed up his nine-month learning experience, saying, “Leadership Arts was an eye-opening experience that provided exposure to the North Texas arts ecosystem and demonstrated the value of creative industries and arts programming in our community.” Teresa Lin of Grant Thornton added, “Dallas has a great arts community and, after participating in LAI, I now understand how big the community is! My eyes were opened each month by visiting different arts venues and hearing about the missions of various North Texas arts organizations. I will never again see Dallas’ arts scene in the same way.”

Meeting Challenges of Leadership

Presiding over the thirty-second annual LAI graduation ceremony—held virtually online due to the Covid-19 pandemic—were BCA Founder’s Chair Nancy Nasher, vice president of NorthPark Management Company, and BCA CEO Katherine Wagner. BCA Program Manager Chelsea Holmes coordinated the event. In closing, CEO Wagner said, “Businesses and the arts are in a time of crisis, mutually facing unexpected challenges. Now, more than ever, it is important for boards of directors in the nonprofit arts sector to have qualified, energetic and educated board leaders who have gained wisdom from their business endeavors.”

Class of 2021 Leadership Arts Institute Application Deadline: July 31, 2020

BCA is now accepting applications for a limited number of positions in the LAI Class of 2021 for both Dallas and Collin/Denton Counties. For more information, visit <http://ntbca.org/lai/> or contact Chelsea Holmes at 972.991.8300, Ext. 605.

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