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ArtsWave Adds VP for Equitable Arts Advancement to its Executive Team

January 10, 2021 – Anticipating the start of its 73rd annual community arts campaign, the primary way the region’s arts receive funding, ArtsWave announces the promotion of Janice Liebenberg to the newly created role of Vice President for Equitable Arts Advancement. This move is the next step in ArtsWave’s diversity, equity, inclusion and access commitment and plan, “Lifting As We Learn.” The plan envisions the Cincinnati region as exponentially more vibrant and competitive with a visibly thriving, culturally diverse arts ecosystem that is supported broadly by the community.

Since joining the organization in 2014, Liebenberg has helped to develop strong relationships with African American artists and donors. She has grown ArtsWave’s network and affinity group, the Circle of African American Leaders for the Arts from its infancy into a campaign powerhouse of 125 members contributing more than \$250,000 each year. She helped launch the Circle’s grantmaking program, in which a percentage of donations by members are directed toward grants to Black arts organizations each year. This program aligns with a key goal of “Lifting As We Learn” – to see a roster of stable, sustainable arts organizations led by people of color in the region’s constellation of arts assets by 2027, ArtsWave’s centennial anniversary.

In 2020, Liebenberg took the reigns of a new partnership forged with the City of Cincinnati and corporate partners to make project grants available to BIPOC artists. This was the first such program at ArtsWave to fund the work of local artists at significant levels; that year, \$300,000 was invested in 27 artists. Liebenberg organized a massive showcase of all of 2021’s sponsored projects, developed on the themes of “truth” and “reconciliation,” which took place at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and Memorial Hall. The program is continuing with a new cohort of artists in 2022 and has been expanded to include professional development opportunities for grant applicants.

“ArtsWave’s mission is to make the powerful impacts of the arts felt by everyone in our community,” said Alecia Kintner, ArtsWave’s President and CEO. “Expanding our management team with this role is another way that we can advance equity and access in all our work and connect our donors to the diverse artistry embedded in this community. Janice’s connections and her lived experiences around the importance of

equitable societies makes her an ideal leader at this critical time for our city and region.”

Prior to joining ArtsWave, Liebenberg served the Scripps National Spelling Bee in a business development capacity and witnessed the power of local and national engagement. “Our region is so fortunate to have the depth and breadth of arts and artists. I’m excited to see the growing impact that artists of color are having on our community,” says Liebenberg, who grew up in South Africa under apartheid and came to the United States in pursuit of higher education. “Representation is imperative. I’m thrilled to have this opportunity at ArtsWave to champion their work and also encourage our large cultural institutions to increasingly incorporate artists of color into their programming.” She and her husband Andy Holzhauser are raising their three kids Olivia, Isabella and Damion, in the heart of the Cincinnati’s arts district in Over-the-Rhine.

Liebenberg joins ArtsWave’s executive team which also includes Chief Operating Officer Kate Kennedy, Vice President for Community Investments Ray Gargano, Vice President for the Community Campaign Lisa Wolter, Vice President of Marketing & Engagement Kathy DeBrosse, and Vice President of Finance Samantha Cribbet. Mary Stagaman is Impact Executive-in-Residence.

The 2022 ArtsWave Community Campaign kicks off next month and is chaired by Tim Steigerwald, President and CEO of Messer Construction.

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About ArtsWave:

ArtsWave, a nonprofit serving the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky Region, is the engine for the arts. Its roots stem back to the late 1920s when the Cincinnati Taft family provided initial investment matched by community support. In the late 1940s, it evolved to become the first united arts fund in the nation and in the mid-1970s, the first organization to initiate workplace giving for the arts. ArtsWave continues to innovate while leading, as illustrated by its No. 1 rank nationally in community arts fundraising; coordination of a sector-wide Blueprint for Collective Action; piloting of new technologies to maximize arts engagement; and development of resources for the arts. Strong funding for the arts has allowed Cincinnati’s arts and culture scene to become a national draw and regional asset, creating a wave of economic and community benefits. Each year, ArtsWave supports the work of over 100 arts organizations, school outreach programs, festivals, community centers, neighborhoods and various collaborations through impact-based grants. ArtsWave raised \$11 million for the arts in 2021, despite the difficult 18-month health and economic crisis that has affected the entire region. Donations can be made at artswave.org/give.