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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

## **WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNOUNCES KATE SOFIS AS NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR**

San Francisco, CA - The San Francisco War Memorial & Performing Arts Center Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the appointment of Kate Sofis as the new Managing Director. With an impressive background in creative sector-based economic development and extensive experience in non-profit leadership, entrepreneurship, and regional economic development strategy, Sofis brings a wealth of expertise to her new role.

Following an extensive six-month selection process that involved reaching out to diverse arts organizations across the Bay Area and nationwide facilities professionals through the International Association of Venue Managers, Board leadership and War Memorial Human Resources vetted over thirty applications for the position. Among the exceptional candidates, Ms. Sofis stood out due to her expertise in creative sector-based economic development, non-profit leadership, and regional economic strategy. The Board is confident that her invaluable experience will drive the War Memorial's mission to operate safe, accessible, world-class venues which promote cultural, educational, and entertainment opportunities in a cost-effective manner for enjoyment by the public.

Sofis most recently served as the Executive Director of the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), where she oversaw an annual budget of over \$150 million. During her tenure there, she successfully implemented city-wide business attraction and retention services, revitalized commercial and cultural corridors, and provided extensive support to arts organizations, small independent artists, and arts-based entrepreneurship. Under Sofis' leadership, the OEWD developed San Francisco's innovative Roadmap to the Future of Downtown, emphasizing the pivotal role of the performing arts, entertainment, and creative sectors in the city's economic future.

Prior to her work at OEWD, Sofis co-founded SFMade, a renowned organization that catalyzed the local urban maker movement. Through her guidance, SFMade supported more than 1,000 small manufacturers and artists, creating over 10,000 jobs for local residents. Sofis also founded PlaceMade, the Bay Area's first non-profit affordable industrial development corporation, where she successfully managed the construction and



property management of the Manufacturing Foundry at 150 Hooper, a groundbreaking \$30 million multi-tenant maker complex.

Beyond her impressive professional accomplishments, Sofis has a deep personal connection to the performing arts. Raised in a family of professional symphony musicians, she grew up backstage and witnessed the challenges faced by artists, craftspeople, and musicians firsthand. This experience fueled her lifelong passion to empower individuals who work with "their hands, heads, and hearts" to thrive.

"Kate will be an excellent Managing Director for the War Memorial," said Thomas E. Horn, President of the San Francisco War Memorial Board of Trustees. "Her lifelong commitment to the arts and intimate knowledge of public policy, along with her City Hall connections, will serve the department well. She is known within the arts community as a leader who can 'get things done.' We welcome her to the War Memorial."

In her new role as Managing Director of the San Francisco War Memorial, Sofis will bring her diverse skill set, City leadership experience, and profound appreciation for the value of creative citizens to the forefront. She will oversee the strategic direction and day-to-day operations of the War Memorial, ensuring its continued success as a cultural and historical landmark in the heart of San Francisco.

Matthew Shilvock, Co-Chair of the San Francisco Arts Alliance and General Director of the San Francisco Opera said "Kate's passionate devotion to the arts, experience in city government, and ability to get things done are vitally important attributes as she takes on this role. I fervently believe that Kate will not only ensure that the buildings of the campus receive the resources and support they need, she will also ensure that the War Memorial is a leading voice in the arts and culture policy of the city. She is someone who will realize the enormous cultural impact of this campus in shaping the broader narrative around the arts. That is needed now more than ever, and I believe Kate will be uniquely positioned to take on that leadership role."

"There are only two places in the United States that have world class Symphony, Opera, Ballet companies, a wonderful jazz venue, and an excellent Conservatory of Music within a few block radius. The other is Lincoln Center. As San Francisco struggles to recover from the economic and social challenges that we face, the Civic Center Arts District can be a significant part of the solution," said Pricilla Geeslin, President of the San Francisco Symphony, "Kate Sofis has relevant leadership, management, real estate development and facilities management experience, as well as strong relationships within city government that would be beneficial to War Memorial. Perhaps more importantly, she has a passion for the arts and for making the Civic Center Arts District an important part of San Francisco's recovery."



Kate Sofis' exceptional skills in operational management, facilities, and capital project management, combined with her extensive experience in leading diverse teams, make her an invaluable addition to the San Francisco War Memorial. Sofis brings a unique perspective and a deep understanding of the critical role the performing arts play in the diversity, culture, and revitalization of the economy of San Francisco post-pandemic. The organization looks forward to embarking on a new chapter under her guidance, as they continue their unwavering dedication to serving the community and preserving San Francisco's vibrant cultural heritage.

About the San Francisco War Memorial:

The San Francisco War Memorial is a treasured cultural institution dedicated to honoring the sacrifices of veterans and providing a venue for world-class performances and events, serving as a vibrant hub for artistic expression and community engagement. The War Memorial houses the War Memorial Opera House, Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall, Herbst Theatre, The Green Room, The Wilsey Center (Atrium Theater, Education Studio), and Harold L. Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall, and is a landmark cultural institution owned and operated by the City and County of San Francisco with one million visitors annually and a combined capacity of 7,000 seats.