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League Appoints Marlah Bonner-McDuffie as Vice President, Development

Bonner-McDuffie Brings Over 20 Years of Strong Nonprofit Leadership and Fundraising Experience to Support the League's Capacity and Impact



Marlah Bonner-McDuffie. Photo Credit: Rosie Simmons

New York, NY (September 15, 2020) – The League of American Orchestras has appointed Marlah Bonner-McDuffie to the position of Vice President, Development, League President and CEO Simon Woods announced today. The executive-level position provides overall leadership to all League development initiatives.

“Marlah is an outstanding fundraiser, who joins the League with wide-ranging experience spanning the corporate, nonprofit, education, and arts sectors,” commented Woods. “She brings a relationship-focused approach to fundraising, and a strong interest in bringing donors’ philanthropic visions to life. I have no doubt that she will inspire our generous orchestral

League of American Orchestras

community as we all work together to sustain and nourish our field through these challenging times.”

Woods, who joined the League earlier this month, added, “Experience shows that a CEO and lead fundraiser arriving together have an exceptional opportunity to advance the organization, so I’m thrilled to begin my tenure at the League with Marlah as a critical strategic partner.”

Bonner-McDuffie will shape the strategies that sustain and grow individual giving and build relationships with major institutional funders, creating comprehensive development operations. She will serve as the League’s lead fundraiser, manage the organization’s team of fundraising staff, and partner with the Board of Directors’ Development Committee Chair in shaping and securing active Board engagement. She said, “As we continue to face the most complex and unprecedented challenges, the League’s work is ever more critical in supporting orchestras. I look forward to partnering with Simon, my very talented League colleagues, and our Board of Directors to create transformational growth for the field, and to continue to build and support a strong ecosystem in which orchestras will thrive.”

A fundraising professional with a demonstrated track record of cultivating and securing principal and major gifts within a wide range of organizations and institutions, Bonner-McDuffie has extensive experience leading all areas of philanthropy, strategic planning, marketing, and business development in both the corporate and nonprofit sectors.

She most recently served as Senior Director of External Affairs for the Philadelphia School Partnership (PSP), building and implementing infrastructure for a comprehensive development operation, and expanding the pipeline for individual, corporate, and foundation donor prospects to support PSP’s mission of improving outcomes and access for low-income and underserved K-12 students in Philadelphia.

Prior to PSP, Bonner-McDuffie served as Associate Dean of Advancement for the College of Media for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, designing and executing a comprehensive development, alumni relations, and marketing and communications program; providing strategic leadership to a team of major gift officers, alumni relations, and marketing communications staff; and exceeding the College’s fundraising goals during their campaign by 300 percent.

Bonner-McDuffie also served in other fundraising and leadership roles in higher education at the University of Illinois and the University of Delaware—exceeding fundraising goals during two capital campaigns, and leading high-performing, metrics-driven fundraising teams.

Prior to transitioning to the nonprofit sector, Bonner-McDuffie began her career in the corporate sector in the consumer brands and pharmaceutical industries, and also founded a consulting firm

League of American Orchestras

specializing in strategic marketing, brand management, public relations, research, event management, and donor relations. Her strong interests in arts and education led her to seek a career in the nonprofit sector, supporting impact-driven and mission-based organizations for which she was most passionate.

Said Bonner-McDuffie, “I am thrilled to be joining the League, and this role combines all of my passions and interests that began many years ago as an elementary school student participating in youth orchestra programs. I credit this experience as critical in helping me build a strong foundation for my academic success as a student—providing discipline, passion, and purpose—and propelling me to achieve many life goals.”

Bonner-McDuffie received a B.S. in Business Administration from Pennsylvania State University’s Mary Jean and Frank P. Smeal College of Business Administration and an M.B.A. from Temple University’s Fox School of Business and Management.

The **League of American Orchestras** leads, supports, and champions America’s orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 1,800 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned orchestras to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement. Its conferences and events, award-winning *Symphony* magazine, website, and other publications inform people around the world about orchestral activity and developments. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners. Visit americanorchestras.org.

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