

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHEEKWOOD WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (January 8, 2021) – Cheekwood welcomes eight new Board Trustees whose initial three-year term began January 1, 2021. The board members include:

Mary Taylor Gallagher is a member of Gullett, Sanford, Robinson, and Martin, PLLC where she chairs the Employment Law Section. In addition to general business litigation, Gallagher focuses her practice on the defense of employers in the railroad, transportation and healthcare industries in federal and state courts throughout the United States. Among many leadership positions, she serves on the Nashville Downtown Partnership Board of Directors, the Advisory Board of Girls on the Run of Middle Tennessee, the Alumni Council and the Dean's Circle of the University of Tennessee College of Law. She is also on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Railroad Trial Counsel.

Judge Alberto R. Gonzales is presently Dean and Doyle Rogers Distinguished Professor of Law at Belmont University College of Law. Formerly, he served as the Nation's 80th Attorney General under President George W. Bush and was with the president in Washington on September 11, 2001. Among his many professional associations, Judge Gonzales is a member of the American Law Institute, former board director of the State Bar of Texas and former president of the Houston Hispanic Bar Association. He has also been recognized as one of The 25 Most Influential Hispanics in America by TIME Magazine.

Sherri Neal is Chief Diversity Officer for HCA Healthcare and is responsible for leading the design, development and implementation of diversity, inclusion, equity and cultural competence strategy and programs. Since joining HCA, she has been a champion of creating a culture of inclusion through thought leadership, strategic direction and creative business solutions. She is an active community volunteer and has received several recognitions including the Tri-State Minority Supplier Development Council (TSMSSDC) Champion Award, Tennessee State University's Women of Legend and Merit Award and the Tennessee Hospital Association Diversity Champion Award.

Dee Patel is the Managing Director of The Hermitage Hotel where she has been employed for more than 16 years. She was named General Manager in 2014 and then Managing Director in 2019—the first female to serve in both of these leadership roles in the iconic hotel's 110-year history. In addition to her work at The Hermitage Hotel, Patel was named President by the Nashville Chapter of the Les Dames d'Escoffier International and is a graduate of the 2020-2021 Leadership Nashville Class. An advocate for women and diversity, Patel is a member of the International Women's Forum of Tennessee and organized Nashville's plans for the 19th amendment centennial celebration in 2020.

A Native Nashvillian, **Sam Patel** is a hotel and commercial real estate developer and manager and is also locally and regionally involved in the restaurant, technology and manufacturing industries. He is professionally and culturally active in the Middle Tennessee community, formerly serving on the Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County's Convention Center Commission and the Transportation Licensing Commission. Sam is an active member of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA).

Deby Pitts has been a Nashville resident for close to 30 years. She worked as a health care executive specializing in turning around financially troubled organizations prior to devoting her time to supporting and improving the Nashville community. She has held volunteer positions with respected organizations like The Nashville Symphony, The American Heart Association, The Elephant Sanctuary, The Hermitage, The Good Dog Foundation (New York), The Junior League and Girl Scout Association, to name a few.

Josh Trusley is a Partner at Ernst & Young where he has been employed for 17 years. He leads audit engagements for public and private companies, assists companies with capital raising activities and leads consulting engagements related to the deployment of new technologies. He serves on Cheekwood's Finance Committee and was named one of Nashville Business Journal's 40 under 40 in 2018.

Linde Wilson is an active and influential volunteer in the Nashville Community. She has served on boards and in volunteer positions with respected organizations and schools like Nashville Library, Nashville Library Foundation, University School of Nashville, Ensworth, Montgomery Bell Academy, Harpeth Hall, University of Nashville, Vanderbilt University, Blair School of Music and Warner Parks. Formerly, Wilson worked as a Librarian at Vanderbilt University Central and Medical Libraries and the University of South Alabama's Medical Library as well as two years in the Library at Cheekwood.

“Cheekwood is committed to embracing, pursuing and celebrating equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion among the board, staff, leadership, partners, vendors, volunteers, members, supporters and visitors,” said Lisa Manning, Cheekwood Board Chair. “We are honored to welcome these eight new trustees who bring a wide range of experiences and talents to Cheekwood’s board as we continue to chart the institution’s strategic direction and serve our community as one of Nashville’s oldest and most beloved cultural institutions.”

To read more about Cheekwood’s leadership and board of trustees, visit cheekwood.org/about/leadership/.

About Cheekwood

Cheekwood is considered one of the finest American Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the extraordinary 1930s estate, with its Georgian mansion and 55 acres of cultivated gardens and expansive vistas, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and museum with historic rooms and art galleries, showcasing works from its 7,000 permanent collection as well as traveling exhibitions. The property includes 12 distinct gardens and a mile-long woodland trail featuring modern and contemporary outdoor sculpture. Cheekwood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, and is a USA Today Top 10 Botanical Garden. Cheekwood is located just 8 miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. Daily hours of operation: Tuesday through Sunday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. For further information, call 615-356-8000 or visit cheekwood.org.

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