



NEWS RELEASE | March 3, 2017

## Minneapolis Parks Foundation welcomes nine new and returning members to its Board of Directors

***Stuart Ackerberg, Dan Avchen, Paul Bauknight, Barbara Bencini, Jocelyn Hale, Mark Heithoff, Mary McCarthy, Paul Reyelts and Rich Varda were elected to three-year terms***

**Minneapolis, Minn.** – The Minneapolis Parks Foundation announced that its Board of Directors elected four returning members at its annual meeting, February 14. The returning Directors – **Stuart Ackerberg**, CEO, Ackerberg; **Dan Avchen**, Ex. Dir.-Strategic Growth, HGA; **Mary McCarthy**, Community Leader; **Paul Reyelts**, Community Leader – started their three-year terms this year. Also joining the board are five members elected earlier in 2016: **Paul Bauknight**, Dir., Urban Placemaking, Urban Homeworks; **Barbara Bencini**, Sr. VP, Boyd, Bencini, Gibbons & Associates; **Jocelyn Hale**, Partner, MillerHale Associates; **Mark Heithoff**, Mark Heithoff Photography; **Rich Varda**, Sr. Advisor-Store Design, Target Corp.

Founded in 2013, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation is an independent, privately funded nonprofit organization that helps transform human life through parks and public space by aligning philanthropic investment with community vision.

“Now more than ever, we need the common ground found in our parks to bring us together. Free and open to the public 365 days a year, parks bring people of every age, gender, socioeconomic, racial, and cultural background together every day,” said Tom Evers, Parks Foundation Executive Director. “These accomplished community and business leaders share with our already outstanding Board of Directors a commitment to connect people to the natural world and each other through visionary parks and public space.”

### 2017 MPF Board of Directors

**Sarah Harris**, Managing Director, University of Minnesota Foundation-Real Estate Advisors, Chairs the Parks Foundation’s 26-member 2017 Board of Directors, which also includes the following individuals continuing current terms: **Sue Bennet**, community leader; **Dorothy Bridges**, Senior VP, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis; **John Crosby**, Community Leader; **Caren Dewar**, Executive Director, Urban Land Institute Minnesota; **Sarah Duniway**, Managing Partner, Gray Plant Mooty; **Tom Fisher**, Director of Metropolitan Design Center, University of Minnesota College of Design; **Dayna Frank**, EVP/Co-owner, First Avenue & 7<sup>th</sup> Street Entry; **Elizabeth Hawn**, Community Leader; **Steve King**, Chairman, Landscape Structures; **Tom Paul**, CCO (retired), United Healthcare; **Thomas Pohlada**, CEO, Carousel Motor Group; **R.T. Rybak**, President, The Minneapolis Foundation; **Frank Wilkinson**, Community Leader; **Riff Yeager**, Partner, ERM. **Meg Forney**, Commissioner, and **Jayne Miller**, Superintendent, serve as *ex officio* members from the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board.

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### **About the Minneapolis Parks Foundation**

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation is an independent, donor-supported nonprofit organization that believes parks have the power to connect us, heal us, and make us whole. We help envision and execute transformative parks and public spaces by working closely with our public partners and in collaboration with the community. Through implementation expertise and philanthropic investment, we accelerate visionary parks projects, including RiverFirst, Water Works and the Great Northern Greenway River Link. The Parks Foundation also supports innovative Minneapolis parks projects through grants and champions world-class design through our Next Generation of Parks™ Event Series. Get involved at MplsParksFoundation.org.

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