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First Stage Managing Director Betsy Corry to Retire Following 2022/23 Season

-Corry has served in the role of managing director for a collective 17 years-

MILWAUKEE – May 17, 2023 – First Stage today announced the retirement of Managing Director **Betsy Corry**, effective at the close of the 2022/23 production season. Corry has served as managing director for the organization since 2012, and also held the role previously from 1996 – 2003.

“Betsy has had a significant impact on growing First Stage into the organization it is today – one of the most acclaimed children’s theaters in the country, serving thousands of young people and their families every year,” said **Chris Marschka**, Board President, First Stage and Head of Commercial Banking in Wisconsin for The PNC Financial Services Group. “We’re incredibly grateful for her leadership and wish her well as she embarks on her next stage.”

Jeff Frank will continue to serve as artistic director, guiding First Stage’s artistic and creative vision.

“It’s been a privilege to work alongside Betsy, and I have valued her leadership and collaborative spirit as we’ve overseen so many seasons together,” said Frank. “While First Stage will miss Betsy, we’re also excited for what’s ahead for the organization and the ways we plan to continue to positively impact the lives of our young people, their families, our audiences and the greater Milwaukee community.”

During her tenure, Corry’s leadership led to programming expansion, ticket sales growth and the groundwork for what would become the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center (MYAC), where First Stage is housed today. She also guided the organization through the uncertainty of the COVID-

19 pandemic, during which First Stage had to pivot to virtual alternatives for programming and productions where possible.

“It’s been a joy to be part of First Stage and to bring performing arts education, training and performances to so many young people through the years,” said Corry. “I’m excited to see what’s in store for First Stage as it continues to be led by a team of talented, passionate people who believe in the organization’s mission of transforming lives through theater.”

In addition to First Stage, Corry previously held roles as development director for Milwaukee Repertory Theater and associate executive director for COA Youth & Family Centers. She first became involved with First Stage as a board member.

Here is a Google Drive link that includes a headshot of Betsy Corry, the First Stage 2023/24 season announcement and the 2021/22 Annual Impact Report:

drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kYs6uf0eobCgUfwC5icx5zOFI1OiXkzQ?usp=share_link

The process to choose Corry’s successor as managing director is underway with a search committee convened by board president Chris Marschka and co-led by board members Alex Kramer and Karen Guy. First Stage has engaged Management Consultants for the Arts (MCA) to facilitate the national search process, and more information is available on MCA’s [website](#). The search committee, along with MCA, will work over the next several months to recruit, interview and recommend a candidate for consideration of the board. Corry will continue to provide support in the interim to help transition the new managing director, once appointed, into their leadership role.

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About First Stage

Founded in 1987, First Stage is one of the nation’s leading theaters for young people and families, and a driving force behind the creation of the best and most innovative plays for family audiences, theater training programs for young people and education initiatives for its schools and community. First Stage ensures that all programming is not only accessible to its community but that it is reflective of the community it serves.

First Stage produces plays that honor the young person’s point of view, include diverse and traditionally underrepresented voices and inspire meaningful conversations. First Stage has presented more than 70 world premiere productions that address important subject matters relevant to today’s youth. The Theater Academy is one of the nation’s largest high-impact theater training programs for young people (3 – 18 years old). Through a challenging curriculum taught by professional teaching artists, the Academy nurtures life skills through stage skills and includes the Next Steps Program that tailors Theater Academy classes to the needs of young people on the autism spectrum and with other developmental disabilities. As Wisconsin’s

leader in arts-integrated education in schools, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education Programs cleverly blend theater activities with standard curriculum – allowing more than 10,000 students annually to learn traditional academic subjects through creativity and self-expression.

First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Milwaukee Arts Partners and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF). firststage.org