

For immediate release
The Lincoln Theatre Center Foundation
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Mount Vernon, WA

With significant consideration given to the skills, experiences and expertise needed to successfully guide the Lincoln Theatre Center Foundation in its next phase of growth, the Board of Directors has selected Damond Morris, PhD. to serve as Executive Director. Morris will be the Lincoln Theatre Center Foundation's ninth Executive Director in its 29-year history. Since 2021 Morris has served as Development Director of the Lincoln Theatre and is both humbled and honored to serve as Executive Director.

Retiring Executive Director Roger Gietzen has a twenty-six-year history working for the Lincoln Theatre Center Foundation, starting as a volunteer, and working in every capacity in the theatre from House Manager to Facilities. Gietzen' long tenure at the Lincoln has encompassed most of the nonprofit Lincoln Theatre Center Foundation's 29-year existence. Under Gietzen' nine-year tenure as Executive Director he has grown the Lincoln's annual budget, increased the number of local community theatre performances and has brought prominent national tours and performers to the theatre enjoyed by thousands of patrons throughout the year. Gietzen served during challenging times in the entertainment industry. When the Lincoln Theatre was shuttered during the pandemic Gietzen was able to keep the entire Lincoln Theatre staff employed by utilizing Federal, State and County grant funding while improving the theatre with a redesign of the lobby, expanding the restroom facilities, and updating concessions and the Art Bar.

Damond Morris has over 20 years' experience on both sides of the proscenium arch as an arts administrator, serving as Artistic Director, House Manager, Stage Manager, set and lighting designer, Production Manager and Technical Director, and arts educator. As the Lincoln Theatre Development Director, Morris advocated with state legislators in the current state budget as well as local city and county governments to bring significant funding to improve the Lincoln Theatre HVAC. Morris brought funding to the theatre from local tribal communities, regional business sponsorships, WA Arts Commission, WA Historic Preservation and National Foundations for events, needed upgrades and educational programming. Morris also helped bring state recognition to Skagit County with the 2022 Governor's Heritage Award for an Organization for Lincoln Theatre.

Morris holds a Ph.D. from the University of Oregon with his dissertation centered on Vaudeville performance during the Great Depression. He served for six years as the tenured Chair of the former Drama Department at Skagit Valley College. With his appointment, Morris brings a vision for the Lincoln Theatre's educational mission that builds on the theatre's success. Morris is excited to grow the arts education program, building on theatre education program- Skagit Theatre Camp - to launch the Lincoln Players Theatre School, providing yearlong theatre instruction in Acting, Singing, Musical Theatre and Stagecraft.

Morris brings an understanding of the complexities of performance to his role as Executive Director, having served as a stage director for many musical productions including the Lincoln Theatre's most

recent musical, *Something Rotten*, and *The Sound of Music*, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (in partnership with TAG), *Gypsy*, The Marx Brothers/ Irving Berlin musical *The Cocoanuts* and Gilbert and Sullivan's *Hot Mikado*. He also loves Shakespeare, having directed many of the Bard's works including *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Richard II*, *King John*, *As You Like It*, and *the Merchant of Venice*.

About the Lincoln Theatre Center Foundation

The mission of the Lincoln Theatre Center Foundation is to entertain, inform, and inspire our diverse community through cinema, live performance, and educational programs while preserving the historic Lincoln Theatre. Built in 1926, generations of patrons hail the historic Lincoln Theatre for its originality and beauty and return to the Lincoln year after year to enjoy movies, live performances, and community events. With just under 500 seats, the theatre hosts over 30,000 attendees per year with an annual operating budget of just over \$1 million. The Lincoln Theatre serves as an important regional performing arts venue and as the cultural cornerstone of historic downtown Mount Vernon.

Learn more at lincolnthetre.org