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Handweavers Guild of America Announces New Executive Director

Leading Fiber Arts Association Primed for Growth

Suwanee, GA – The Handweavers Guild of America, Inc. (HGA), an international association of fiber artists, is excited to welcome Elizabeth Williamson as its new Executive Director. Elizabeth succeeds Sandra Bowles whose retirement was announced in the Fall 2014 issue of *Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot*. The selection was made after a six-month national search and selection process.

"We are thrilled to have Elizabeth on board as our new Executive Director" says Catherine Marchant, first Vice President of the HGA Board. "She has some big shoes to fill, with Sandra Bowles' retirement, but we feel she is up to the task. Elizabeth brings experience with nonprofit arts organizations along with an understanding of technology that will benefit HGA."

Elizabeth comes to HGA with a strong record of proven leadership and organizational growth in the nonprofit arts. She most recently served as the Executive Director of the Aiken Center for the Arts (ACA) in South Carolina; a 22,000 square foot arts center with 72 gallery exhibitions each year, classes in the arts for youth and adults, performing arts presentations and a retail space. During her time there Elizabeth put emphasis on building partnerships and instituted the Aiken Cultural Leadership Consortium to unite and support the arts and cultural organizations of Aiken for the purpose of collaboration, advocacy and community.

Prior to her work at ACA, Elizabeth served as Managing Director of Ohio's Columbus Children's Theatre (CCT), a theatre dedicated to inspiring, enriching and empowering the imaginations of children and their families through live theatre and theatre education. Elizabeth oversaw a turnaround in CCT's finances and as a result of her efforts CCT exceeded all records for earned and contributed revenue and attendance and participation. Elizabeth was not only responsible for reinvigorating CCT's annual fundraiser by transitioning it to a family-friendly experience, but also for expanding CCT's accessibility by implementing theatre performances for families with children who have sensory sensitivity or autism.

"Elizabeth is an expert in non-profit management. During her tenure here our organization thrived. Our branding was sharpened, our visibility increased, and our attendance continued to grow every year," said Bill Goldsmith, Columbus Children's Theatre's Artistic Director. "Elizabeth is a strong leader – but still a team player."

"I look forward to serving the members of HGA and couldn't be more excited to serve as the organization's next Executive Director," Elizabeth said. "My first objectives are to work with the Board and staff to develop a strategic plan that will prime HGA for growth in the near future and to ensure we are following and implementing the guiding principles and best practices for nonprofits."

"Having been a member of HGA for over 30 years and a Board member since 2008, I am excited to be to working with Elizabeth and look forward to our organization being re-invigorated under new

leadership. I hope that everyone will provide her with the support she needs to take us into the future,” said Suanne M. Pasquarella, President of the HGA Board of Directors.

Elizabeth earned her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Her experience includes work in public relations, customer service, event planning and entrepreneurship. An avid skier and former instructor, in her free time Elizabeth enjoys trips to the mountains with family and friends; traveling with her boyfriend, Mark, and dog, Juliet; and pursuing her artistic aspirations as a painter and writer.

About the Handweavers Guild of America

Founded in 1969, the Handweavers Guild of America, Inc. (HGA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit association of fiber artists with the mission to encourage excellence, inspire creativity, and preserve fiber traditions through education. Their programming includes the quarterly publication of *Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot* journal; Convergence[®], a biennial conference drawing attendees from 30 countries; a certification program (COE) in the art disciplines of handweaving, handspinning, dyeing and basketmaking; Teaching and Learning through Correspondence (TLC), a yearlong program of independent study; and a scholarship fund. For more information please visit their website, www.WeaveSpinDye.org.

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