

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DONNA DREW SAWYER NAMED AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE
BALTIMORE OFFICE OF PROMOTION & THE ARTS**

*Innovative leader has blended fine arts and business expertise to build business,
community and artist engagement for BOPA*

Baltimore, MD – After an extensive national search, Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts' (BOPA) Board of Directors has selected Donna Drew Sawyer as Chief Executive Officer. Sawyer will succeed William "Bill" Gilmore who stepped down as CEO at the end of December 2017 after 37 years of leadership. BOPA, a nonprofit 501 (c)(3), is the city's arts council, events center and film office.

Sawyer was unanimously recommended for Board confirmation by the BOPA search committee comprised of: BOPA Board members Anana Kambon (committee chair), Paula Rome and Sandy Hillman; and representatives of the broader Baltimore Arts community: Dr. Leslie King Hammond, Jeffrey Kent, Jed Dietz and Clair Zamoiski Segal. Koya Leadership Partners, a national executive search firm that works exclusively with mission driven clients, was retained and managed the national search.

"We are thrilled to have a new CEO who can continue and enhance BOPA's contributions to the Baltimore City community and region," said Anana Kambon, chair of BOPA's Board of Directors. "Donna has a strong diverse history in arts leadership, solid marketing and business acumen and a fierce commitment to equity and collaboration. Her talents combined with our impressive BOPA team will provide greater opportunities for joint programs, projects and partnerships with local artists, the City of Baltimore, funders, affinity groups and arts service organizations. We're extremely excited about BOPA's future."

Hired as the Chief of External Affairs at the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts in 2017, Donna Drew Sawyer previously held senior positions in the arts and non-profits sector including the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Arts and Science Council of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chrysler Museum of Art and Sesame Workshop. Sawyer served on the Norfolk Virginia's Arts Commission and helped launch the Virginia Waterfront Arts Festival as founding director of the Wilder Performing Arts Center. Also, she was managing director of the

Marketing Services Organization, a collaborative arts marketing agency funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Sawyer has served on art panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and on the YWCA Board of Directors. In addition, Sawyer is a writer; her debut novel, *Provenance*, won the 2017 Maryland Writers' Association Award for Historical Fiction and was a finalist for the same award at New York's Harlem Book Festival.

"BOPA is a unique organization with a remarkable history. I am excited and so fortunate to be working with an incredible team of professionals in this new capacity," Sawyer said. "BOPA's mission is to make Baltimore a more vibrant city by promoting and supporting arts and culture. As a proud resident of Baltimore City, a writer who understands the exhilaration of the creative process and now, as CEO of BOPA, I can contribute to the vibrancy and the future of our city by helping to make Baltimore a unique and wonderful place to live, create, work and plan. I can't think of anything better than getting to do that every single day."

In addition to her work in the arts and non-profit sector, Sawyer held senior advertising, marketing and promotion positions with Young & Rubicam Advertising and AT&T International. She was an assistant professor of Communications and Journalism at Norfolk State University and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the New York Institute of Technology and an M.B.A. from Texas Southern University.

She and her husband, Bowie State University professor and author [Dr. Granville M. Sawyer, Jr.](#), live in Baltimore City. They have two grown daughters.

The [Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts](#) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization which serves as Baltimore City's arts council, film office, and events agency. By producing large-scale events such as [Light City](#), [Artscape](#) and the [Baltimore Book Festival](#), and providing funding and support to artists, arts programs and organizations across the city, BOPA's goal is to make Baltimore a more vibrant and creative city.

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