



## **Apollo Theater Announces Charles Phillips as New Chairman of the Board**

### **Phillips commits \$1 million gift to the non-profit Theater to ensure its continued resilience for future generations**

**Harlem, NY** – (December 3, 2020) – The Apollo Theater announced today that **Charles Phillips** has been elected the non-profit Theater’s new Chairman of the Board. Phillips, who has served on the Apollo’s Board of Directors since 2015 and most recently as its Vice Chairman, marked his new role with a generous \$1 million gift to the Apollo Theater’s Emergency Fund, which was created to ensure the iconic non-profit’s continued financial stability amid its closure due to COVID-19. Phillips succeeds longtime Chair Richard “Dick” Parsons, who has led the Apollo’s Board since 2001 and was integral in preserving the cultural landmark as a place for innovation and Black excellence. Parsons has been elected Chairman Emeritus and will remain on the Executive Committee and will serve as a senior advisor to the Theater.

“From his work on the Board’s Executive Committee to his generous \$1 million gift to the Theater at this critical time, Charles’ commitment to the Apollo has been immense. His support, coupled with additional donations from many donors, has enabled us to meet the Emergency Fund’s \$4 million goal, allowing us to create dynamic, free events and education programs on the Apollo Digital Stage and ensuring that we continue to serve our community even though our physical doors remain closed,” said **Apollo Theater President and CEO Jonelle Procope**. “Dick’s contributions to the Apollo are immeasurable and his ongoing support invaluable. He anchored the turnaround of the Apollo Theater and set the institution on the path to success, and I am tremendously grateful to him for his leadership and dedication to the Apollo for over 20 years.”

“The Apollo Theater has been the keeper of the culture and a vibrant platform for artistic innovation for over 86 years. I am honored to partner with my good friends and great leaders, Jonelle Procope and Dick Parsons and the board of trustees for the next stage of growth and discovery at the Apollo,” said **Charles Phillips**.”

Phillips continued “The Apollo has been a force for the progress led by artists with values as rich as their talents. In times of social change, artists come home to the Apollo in the spirit of unity and purposeful expression. From Sarah Vaughan to Notorious B.I.G, President Obama, Jay-Z, Metallica, Count Basie, Luther Vandross, James Brown, and Bruno Mars, the Apollo has been the theater for the influencers that define genres, personify cultures, and change minds.”

Charles Phillips is the former CEO/Chairman of Infor, a global leader in business software, President of Oracle, and Managing Director at Morgan Stanley. Phillips is also a former Captain in the Marine Corps and currently serves on the boards of ViacomCBS and the Council of Foreign Relations. He previously

served on President Obama’s Economic Recovery Advisory Board. He is currently Managing Partner and co-Founder of Recognize, a technology operating and investment firm creating the next generation of software-enabled services.

“Charles has been a dynamic leader and indispensable colleague, and I know that with his commitment to the Theater the Apollo will continue to grow,” said **Richard D. Parsons**. “I am confident that his leadership will enable the Apollo to continue to expand and enhance the many audiences we serve in Harlem and across the U.S. I look forward to continuing my work with Charles and Jonelle to ensure that the Apollo remains an indispensable part of New York City and the world.

Phillips, who has twice chaired the Theater’s annual gala, will continue championing the non-profit Theater’s programming, educational, and community initiatives, and support the Apollo’s commitment to providing a home for artists and the community as it continues to navigate the health crisis and respond to the important social issues for Harlem, New York, and the nation.

A believer in the power of innovation, art, and culture, Phillips will lead the Apollo’s Board of Trustees along with the newly elected Vice Chair, Patricia Miller Zollar. The Theater’s board is comprised of 26 prominent leaders from the artistic, civic, and business communities. The Apollo Theater of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will provide the inspiration and venues, both digital and linear, for artists to continue moving audiences and unifying people.

During his tenure, Parsons raised nearly \$100 million for the institution. Parsons was instrumental in recruiting President and CEO Jonelle Procope, who has led the non-profit theater since 2003, and worked closely with her to expand the Apollo’s Board of Trustees. Parsons’ work also enabled the Apollo to grow its artistic programs, reach new audiences, and to expand its footprint to include two new theaters at the Victoria Theater located at 233 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **ABOUT THE APOLLO THEATER**

The legendary Apollo Theater—the soul of American culture—plays a vital role in cultivating emerging artists and launching legends. Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the world.

With music at its core, the Apollo’s programming extends to dance, theater, spoken word, and more. This includes the world premiere of the theatrical adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates’s *Between the World and Me* and the New York premiere of the opera *We Shall Not Be Moved*; special programs such as the blockbuster concert *Bruno Mars Live at the Apollo*; *100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella*; and the annual *Africa Now! Festival*. The non-profit Apollo Theater is a performing arts presenter, commissioner, and collaborator that also produces festivals, large-scale dance and musical works organized around a set of core initiatives that celebrate and extend the Apollo’s legacy through a contemporary lens, including the *Women of the World (WOW) Festival* as well as other multidisciplinary collaborations with partner organizations.

Since introducing the first Amateur Night contests in 1934, the Apollo Theater has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms and has ushered in the emergence of many new musical genres—including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, and hip-hop. Among the countless legendary performers who launched their careers at the Apollo are Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, H.E.R., D’Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly and Miri Ben Ari; and the Apollo’s forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy. For more information about the Apollo, visit [www.ApolloTheater.org](http://www.ApolloTheater.org).

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