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Sarasota Opera Announces New Board Leadership and Trustee Appointments

Sarasota, FL — Sarasota Opera's Artistic Director Victor DeRenzi and General Director Richard Russell are proud to announce several leadership updates and appointments to the company's [Board of Trustees](#). The changes, effective June 1, 2025, reflect the organization's ongoing efforts to strengthen its governance and leadership ahead of a historic season celebrating [100 years of the Sarasota Opera House](#).

[Arthur Siciliano](#) has been re-elected Chair of the Board of Trustees. Dr. Siciliano, a retired entrepreneur with a Ph.D. in medicinal chemistry and an MBA, is a devoted supporter of Sarasota Opera alongside his wife, B. Aline Blanchard. Together, they have championed youth initiatives and educational programs at the company.

[Katherine Benoit](#) has been re-elected Vice Chair of the Board, bringing broad experience in organizational leadership and a strong commitment to the arts community. Joseph Mallof, who recently served as CEO of the housewares company World Kitchen LLC in Chicago, joined the board earlier this year and has been elected Treasurer. Another new board member, David Bialosky, former executive vice president and general counsel at Goodyear, was elected Secretary.

Joining the board as a new trustee is Lynn Blackledge, a long-time Sarasota resident and active member of the area's cultural and philanthropic circles. Following a career as a technology consultant, her volunteer service and support of local arts and other non-profit organizations have made her a familiar and respected figure within the community.

The Board also recognized two long-serving trustees, Ron Archbold and William Tompkins, with appointments to the honorary role of Emeritus Trustee, in recognition of their distinguished service and ongoing support of the company. Both individuals have contributed meaningfully to Sarasota Opera's growth over the years and will continue to provide guidance and advocacy.

Sarasota Opera also welcomes new leadership of its two vital supporting guilds. Sherry Wheeler will serve as President of the [Sarasota Opera Guild](#), and Elizabeth Aversa steps into the role of President of the [Manatee Opera Guild](#). The guilds play a key role in community engagement and event support across the Sarasota and Manatee regions.

About Sarasota Opera

Sarasota Opera is entering its 67th season of bringing world-class opera to Florida's Gulf Coast and celebrating 100 years of the historic Sarasota Opera House. The company was launched in 1960 in the historic 320-seat Asolo Theater on the grounds of Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art. In 1984, the company moved into the former A.B. Edwards Theater — now the Sarasota Opera House. Since then, the company has gained an international reputation as one of the leading regional opera companies in the U.S. through initiatives such as the Masterworks Revival Series and the Verdi Cycle. The company's Sarasota Youth Opera is the most comprehensive youth opera program in the U.S. The Sarasota Opera House, which underwent a \$20 million renovation and rehabilitation in 2007, has been called "one of America's finest venues for opera" by Musical America. Since 1983, the company has been under the artistic leadership of Victor DeRenzi and the administrative leadership of General Director Richard Russell since 2012. Sarasota Opera is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts. Programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Sarasota Opera • 61 N. Pineapple Avenue • Sarasota, FL 34236 • (941) 366-8450 • SarasotaOpera.org