



For Immediate Release

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National Book Foundation, Presenter of National Book Awards, Appoints Lisa Lucas Executive Director

New York, NY (February 10, 2016): – The Board of Directors of the National Book Foundation, presenter of the National Book Awards, announced today that Lisa Lucas has been appointed Executive Director to succeed Harold Augenbraum who had earlier announced his decision to step down at the end of March.

Now in its 67th year, the National Book Awards have recognized many of America’s greatest writers. Recipients of the award have included such writers as Ralph Ellison, Flannery O’Connor, John Updike, Joan Didion and Ta-Nehisi Coates. In recent years, the Foundation has launched new programming in support of its mission to celebrate the best of American literature, to expand its audience, and to enhance the cultural value of great writing in America. Lisa Lucas will be only the third Executive Director in the Foundation’s history.

“We went through an exhaustive search process,” said David Steinberger, President and CEO of The Perseus Books Group who serves as Chairman of the National Book Foundation, “and we could not be more pleased with the outcome. Lisa Lucas is a dynamic leader who has served as a passionate advocate for literature and has built an impressive track record of accomplishment in the not-for-profit world across theater, film and literature.”

“I am gratified to have this opportunity to lead such an important institution in support of books, writers and readers from all walks of life,” said Lisa Lucas, whose first day in the new role will be March 14th. “The Foundation has made major strides in recent years, and I am looking forward to building on the great work that has been done by The Board of Directors, Harold Augenbraum and the Foundation’s staff.”

Lisa Lucas joins the Foundation after serving as Publisher of Guernica, a non-profit on-line magazine focusing on writing that explores the intersection of art and politics with an international and diverse focus. At Guernica, Lisa raised the profile of the magazine, helped grow its audience, developed its funding base and forged partnerships throughout the literary and cultural community. Prior to that, she was the Director of Education at the Tribeca Film Institute where she developed and launched educational programs serving 10,000 youth annually.

The search process was conducted by the executive search firm Spencer Stuart and overseen by a search committee of the National Book Foundation Board. In addition to David Steinberger, members of the Board serving on the search committee included the Board's Vice Chair Morgan Entrekin, CEO and Publisher of Grove Atlantic; Reynold Levy, President of The Robin Hood Foundation; Carolyn Reidy, President and CEO of Simon and Schuster; Calvin Sims, President and CEO of International House; and Strauss Zelnick, founder of Zelnick Media Capital.

“Lisa Lucas is an exciting choice as Executive Director,” said Harold Augenbraum. “I look forward to working closely with Lisa and the Board to ensure a smooth and effective leadership transition.”

In recent years, the Foundation developed the Literarian Award for Outstanding Service to the American Literary Community, presented to, among others, Maya Angelou, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Joan Ganz Cooney; 5 Under 35, a prize program that recognizes emerging fiction writers; BookUp, a growing after-school reading program for middle-schoolers, now in fifteen sites; Innovations in Reading, a prize program that recognizes grass-roots literary activism; National Book Awards on Campus, now in colleges around the country; Eat, Drink and Be Literary, a public literary program partnership with the Brooklyn Academy of Music; and National Book Awards at the Miami Book Fair International.

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The National Book Award is one of the nation's most prestigious literary prizes and has a stellar record of identifying and rewarding quality writing. In 1950, William Carlos Williams was the first Winner in Poetry, the following year William Faulkner was honored in Fiction, and so on through the years. Many previous Winners of the National Book Award are now firmly established in the canon of American literature, such as Sherman Alexie, Saul Bellow, Louise Erdrich, Joyce Carol Oates, Philip Roth and Adrienne Rich.