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Media Contact:

Ann Fink, Carol Fox and Associates,
773.969.5042

annf@carolfoxassociates.com

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MORRISON-SHEARER FOUNDATION NAMES ALIDA SZABO NEW BOARD CHAIR REPLACING CAROL DOTY

Shayne Bullen Named New Vice Chair

Northbrook, Ill. – The Morrison-Shearer Foundation (MSF) has named **Alida Szabo** as its new Board Chair, succeeding **Carol Doty** who, after retiring from the Morton Arboretum, joined the MSF Board in 2002 and has served as its Chair since 2006.

“Carol is leaving some big shoes to fill, but having served on the Foundation Board prior to and throughout her tenure I come to this position with a thorough knowledge of where the Foundation has been and appreciation of its vision for the future,” says Szabo.

During Doty’s tenure, a significant portion of the Morrison and Shearer archives, including photos, costumes, programs and artifacts were placed in the Newberry Library; and the Morrison films were placed in the Chicago Film Archives. In addition, the Foundation published Shearer’s three-volume autobiography, “Without Wings the Way Is Steep,” and produced numerous public programs.

A tribute to Shearer and Morrison, the Foundation recently established a new partnership with the Ragdale Foundation through a gift of \$1.5 million to support new construction including the Sybil Shearer Studio on Ragdale’s Lake Forest campus. The new construction is scheduled to open in 2021.

As Director of Audience Development, **Alida Szabo** led Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s marketing, advertising, and media relations, from 1998 through her retirement in 2018. Her 20-year tenure at the Tony Award-winning theater included the opening of a 500-seat courtyard-style facility on Navy Pier in 1999, and the 2017 launch of the neighboring theater, The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare, one of the most flexible theater venues in the world with audience capacities ranging from 150 -850. Prior to joining Chicago Shakespeare, Szabo was a consultant in program development, marketing, and media services for such clients as Walt Disney’s Theatrical Division and the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. She also served as a panelist and advisor for National Endowment for the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council, Chicago Cultural Center Foundation, and the Chicago Dance Coalition. She spent seven seasons at The Goodman Theatre, served two Chicago mayors and was associated with several of Chicago’s prominent off-loop theater groups, including MoMing Dance and Arts Center and St. Nicholas Theater Company. Szabo holds a Master Degree in Urban Affairs from Roosevelt University.

Shayne Bullen has also been named Vice Chair of the Morrison-Shearer Foundation Board. As Vice Chair she joins the Executive Committee which includes Board Secretary Mary Sue Wheeler

and Treasurer Brian Schaeffer. Bullen, a former dancer with the Sybil Shearer Company, is a former educator and high school administrator and current small business owner. In her role as an educator, she developed the Dance Education Curriculum at Schaumburg High School, was the Orchestis [Dance] Director at Prospect High School and the District 214 Dance Show Director for one season. As an administrator from 2003 – 2017, she served as high school Activities Director. Bullen holds a Bachelor's Degree in Dance Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Roosevelt University.

The Board of Trustees Executive Committee is rounded out by the continuing service of Mary Sue Wheeler as Secretary and Brian Schaeffer as Treasurer.

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Sybil Shearer (1912 – 2005) was a leading pioneer of modern dance in the mid-20th century, beginning in New York with the Humphrey-Weidman Company and Agnes de Mille while passionately developing her own solos on the side. After a critically acclaimed solo debut at the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall in 1941, she moved to Chicago, first teaching at Roosevelt College and starting the Sybil Shearer School of Dance. She soon met photographer **Helen Balfour Morrison** (1901-1984), who became her lighting director, photographer, filmographer and artistic collaborator for the next 40 years. Through the 1940s Shearer continued to return to New York for annual solo performances that attracted leading figures from the dance community. She gave these up in 1951 when, in collaboration with Morrison, she built a studio-residence in Northbrook, Illinois, and started the Sybil Shearer Company. In 1970, critic Walter Terry stated that her "technical skill, creative independence, and unpredictable innovations have made her what is known as 'a dancer's dancer'" and called her "one of the world's foremost modern dancers," a status reaffirmed in 2014 by noted dance historian, David Vaughan. Shearer may not be as widely remembered today as one would expect, perhaps because she worked out of the mainstream and close to nature, with infrequent performances.

The Morrison-Shearer Foundation, established by Shearer in 1991, perpetuates the legacy of dancer-choreographer Sybil Shearer and photographer Helen Balfour Morrison as an inspiration for new creativity in the arts. This legacy has been shared through grants and fellowships, occasional public programs and dance re-creations, placement of artifacts, photos and film in archival repositories at the Newberry Library and Chicago Film Archives, and the publishing of a three-part Sybil Shearer autobiography. The Foundation recently announced a \$1.5 million grant to Lake Forest's Ragdale for the construction of the Sybil Shearer Studio at Ragdale which will be a living embodiment of the legacy of the two women, encouraging new creativity for years to come. For more information visit morrisonshearer.org.