

Manitoba Arts Council Leader to Retire

Senior arts leader Douglas Riske retires as Executive Director

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA. JULY 14, 2015. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

After 17 years at the heart of Manitoba's arts and cultural community, Douglas Riske will be retiring from his position as Executive Director of The Manitoba Arts Council, effective December 31, 2015. Keith Bellamy, Manitoba Arts Council Chair, announced that an international search for a new Executive Director will begin soon.

"Douglas has skillfully, wisely and passionately guided the Manitoba Arts Council for the past 17 years," said Bellamy. "I want to thank him for his tremendous contribution not only to MAC but to the quality of life in Manitoba and to the Canadian arts and cultural community."

Riske was appointed Executive Director of the Manitoba Arts Council in 1998, following two years as Executive Director of the Yukon Arts Centre Corporation in Whitehorse. Prior to moving into the public sector, Riske worked in the arts and culture sector for over 40 years as an actor, stage manager, director, artistic director, producer, consultant, teacher and cultural manager. He founded two theatre companies in Calgary, one of which, Alberta Theatre Projects, continues to produce challenging new Canadian work as a regular part of each season. He served as artistic director in Kelowna at Sunshine Theatre and at the New Bastion Theatre Company in Victoria.

As a freelance director he was an Assistant Director at the Stratford Festival, and directed a number of productions at Stage West Dinner Theatres and at the Manitoba Theatre Centre. As an actor he performed on stage as well as in film, television and radio. Riske has also been active in various industry associations including Canadian Actors Equity Association and ACTRA, the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and was the founding chair of the Canadian Public Arts Funders.



Riske has received the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal 1977, recognizing contribution and excellence of work in the community and cultural sector and the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Confederation, 1992 recognizing a significant contribution to the citizens and communities of Canada.

During his time with the Council, Riske managed a complex organization through significant change that included the appointment and orientation of 15 new Council members in 2000/2001; the development of an innovative operating support program for major Manitoba arts organizations; the growth and refinement of the Council's Artist in the Schools and ArtsSmarts programs; an increase in the profile of the Council through staffing and new communications and organizational initiatives; expanded and effective community consultation processes across the province and the development of a grants management system that will lead to online application processing in the near future.

"I have very mixed feelings about leaving the extraordinary world of support to the arts" said Riske. "The opportunity to work at the Manitoba Arts Council, one of the ten provincial funding agencies in Canada, has been a once-in-a-lifetime professional opportunity. The knowledge and experience acquired in my years as an artistic director and cultural manager did not fully prepare me for the amazing passion and extraordinary scope and scale of the arts in Manitoba. It has been a privilege to be a part of it. And I expect to continue contributing to the growth and quality of the arts in Canada and beyond for some years to come."

The Manitoba Arts Council, founded in 1965 through An Act to Establish the Manitoba Arts Council, promotes, preserves, supports and advocates for the arts as essential to the quality of life of all the people of Manitoba. It supports artists and arts organizations as well as schools and educational organizations through over 50 granting programs and other initiatives including Artists in the Schools, artists' residencies, grants to major arts organizations and individuals.

For more information, and interviews, contact:

L. Nadine Delisle

Director, Communications and Community Engagement

ndelisle@artscouncil.mb.ca

