



# WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

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## WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS ELECTS RUDY BURWELL AS NEW BOARD CHAIR

*Burwell has been an arts advocate and community-driven leader for over 25 years*



**July 14, 2022, Washington, D.C.:** Washington Performing Arts, one of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, announced today that **Rudy Burwell** has been elected to become the next Chair of the Board of Directors and will begin his term on September 1. Burwell will succeed Tom Gallagher, who will step down as Chair on August 31 but continue to serve as a member of the Board of Directors. Gallagher, who has been lauded for his vision, empathy, and leadership, served as Chair for four seasons from 2018/19 to 2021/22, partnering closely with Senior Management and the Board to lead Washington Performing Arts successfully through the challenging landscape of

the pandemic.

Since the 2019/20 season, Burwell has served as Vice Chair of the Washington Performing Arts Philanthropy & Patron Engagement Committee. Before joining the Board in 2019, Burwell and his wife Mona Mohib were devoted patrons and audience members of Washington Performing Arts, and together they have sponsored wide-ranging programs across genres and disciplines, including the annual *Living the Dream ... Singing the Dream* performance in memory of his father.

“Rudy embodies a deep understanding of and appreciation for Washington Performing Arts’s mission and goals. He has already demonstrated his commitment to Washington Performing Arts in myriad ways,” states **Jenny Bilfield**, President & CEO of Washington Performing Arts. “He’s a strategic thinker, communicator, and collaborator, and I know that he will be a successful leader of our deeply engaged and passionate Board of Directors. With his experience and enthusiasm for our full complement of programming, Rudy will be a great partner and a great ambassador as Washington Performing Arts intensifies programs that speak to our wide community, engage varied audiences, and ensure that the arts are accessible to people where they work and live.”

“It’s very humbling to be chosen. This is a fantastic organization with a bright future,” **Burwell** states. “As tennis legend Billie Jean King used to say, ‘Pressure is a privilege.’ As we emerge from the pandemic, there are challenges but also many opportunities. We have the chance to meet people where they are, whether they live in D.C. or want to enjoy the arts from home, wherever they are. I am excited for this challenge and ready for the next development at Washington Performing Arts.”

### **About Burwell**

Retired U.S. Army Colonel Rudy Burwell first moved to Washington, D.C., in 2002, while serving as a communications professional for the U.S. Army, and later moved to Arlington, Virginia, with his wife and children.

Among the highlights of his impressive military career, Burwell ascended to the role of Chief of Media Operations for the Multi-National Corps during the intensely observed military “surge” in Iraq in 2007. Burwell also managed the world’s largest continuing media-embed program, which placed 1,200 journalists annually – including high-visibility reporters such as Katie Couric, Anderson Cooper, and Geraldo Rivera – into combat units. During Burwell’s time on the Army Staff in the Pentagon, he was the senior public affairs representative for the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology, the office responsible for all equipment fielding, procurement, and new technology. In 2005-06, Rudy was granted a National Security Fellowship at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

After 27 years of service, he retired from Director of Communications for the Army Reserve in 2011, and moved into communications leadership roles at several private corporations.

In 2013, he co-founded Encompass Supply, Inc., an electrical construction supplies company and he continues to serve as President. Encompass Supply has supplied electrical materials to many federal and state projects including the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum Revitalization, Virginia Commonwealth University Adult Outpatient Pavilion, and Virginia Commonwealth University Children’s Hospital Project, among others.

Burwell is an avid arts lover, as both an audience member and as a musician. During his 27 years of active duty in the United States Army, Burwell—who enjoys playing the trumpet—would search for opportunities to play with local musicians and community bands in St. Louis, Missouri; San Francisco, California; and in Washington, D.C.

“I love the arts, and I love music. I’ve been a patron, donor, and Board member of Washington Performing Arts because it fulfills a unique role in Washington’s musical landscape through the diversity of its programming. Washington Performing Arts brings together jazz, gospel, in addition to standards and classical music,” Burwell shares. “I also appreciate that as Washington Performing Arts isn’t tied to a particular venue, they may bring their performances throughout the region and reach new and different audiences. My wife Mona and I see the importance of Washington Performing Arts’s educational programming for children.”

At Washington Performing Arts, he hopes to connect people through the healing power of music. As a military veteran, Burwell knows firsthand about the struggles and suffering of soldiers. “Art is a healing medium, it is a

balm that supplements both physical and psychological therapy. There will be opportunities for Washington Performing Arts to work with veterans' hospitals and non-profit organizations on programming and performances.”

Burwell is deeply invested in the local community through arts, family, and professional development endeavors. His volunteer experience also includes serving on the Virginia Board for Contractors and the Arlington County Industrial Development Authority.

## **ABOUT WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS**

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for more than half a century with artists, audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: for decades, in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we have presented a tremendous range of artists and art forms, from the most distinguished symphony orchestras to both renowned and emerging artists in classical music, jazz, international genres, and more. We also have an ever-expanding artistic and educational presence on the internet, addressing the programming challenges of this time of pandemic while envisioning ongoing opportunities for online connection and community in a post-COVID world. Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts institutions. Through events online and in myriad performance venues and neighborhoods, we engage international visiting artists in community programs and introduce local artists to wider audiences. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through residencies and education programs.

Washington Performing Arts on Social Media:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WashingtonPerformingArtsSociety](https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonPerformingArtsSociety)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/WashingtonPerformingArts](https://www.instagram.com/WashingtonPerformingArts)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/WashPerformArts](https://www.twitter.com/WashPerformArts)

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/washington-performing-arts-society/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/washington-performing-arts-society/)