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Starlight Announces Lindsey Rood-Clifford New President + C.E.O.



First Woman to Lead Iconic Kansas City Institution

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Starlight, the oldest continually operating performing arts venue and located in Swope Park, announced that Lindsey Rood-Clifford has been selected as President and C.E.O. of the organization. Her appointment began April 1, 2023. Headshots and more can be found in the media kit section of kcstarlight.com/newsroom.

Howard Cohen, President of Starlight’s Board of Directors, stated, “Lindsey has demonstrated her commitment to Starlight through her exemplary work in establishing a successful philanthropic team for Starlight. I’m looking forward to working with Lindsey as she steps into this role. Her passion for the arts is unwavering, and it is exciting to have the first woman to lead Starlight in its over 70-year history.”

For nearly two decades, Rood-Clifford has been dedicated to making positive change through advancing nonprofit missions in her professional career. As Starlight’s Vice President of Philanthropy, she grew Starlight’s philanthropic revenue by more than 50% while increasing its fundraising capacity and launched its first major multi-million-dollar fundraising campaign in almost 20 years. Rood-Clifford established new initiatives to build and steward Starlight’s donor base and key civic and public stakeholder relationships. Previously, Rood-Clifford served in senior roles for Starlight’s for-profit subsidiary EPIC Innovative Events, serving as a consultant for nonprofit and corporate clients in Kansas City and across the country, using theatre and storytelling as the foundation to advance brands and missions.

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Rood-Clifford stated, “It is a great honor to be appointed President + C.E.O. of Starlight. I have been privileged to call Starlight my home for more than 16 years, and this organization has meant so much to me throughout my life and career. As a high schooler, I participated in the Blue Star Awards program at Starlight, and I’m so proud to be leading the organization that inspired me to pursue a career in the arts sector. Starlight is poised for tremendous growth. As we move forward into the future, I am dedicated to connecting our entire community through live arts experiences for ALL generations.” Rood-Clifford continued, “It is my desire and commitment to serve the Kansas City community with the utmost of excellence in all that Starlight can offer through the best Broadway musicals, concerts, community engagement programs, and events. I couldn’t be more excited for this next chapter of Starlight’s story.”

A lifelong Kansas City native, Rood-Clifford’s first theatre memories are of attending Starlight performances with her family and friends. She is also a product of several Starlight community engagement programs, having participated in the Blue Star Awards program and beginning her arts administration career as a summer intern in the Bob Rohlfs Internships Program.

Outside of Starlight, Lindsey is the President of the Kansas City Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals; the Secretary of the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce’s Centurions Alumni Board; past chair of Kansas City’s National Philanthropy Day; and a Vice President on the Board of Directors for In the Name of GRACE, a foundation dedicated to serving those recovering from addiction. She is a 2017 graduate of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce’s Centurions Leadership Program. Rood-Clifford received a B.A. in English from the University of Kansas.

About Starlight

Opened as a theatre in 1950 and a nonprofit organization in 1951, Starlight is the largest and oldest performing arts organization in Kansas City, Missouri, and connects our community through live arts experiences that entertain, inspire, and engage audiences of all ages. Offering diverse programming year-round, Starlight presents Broadway musicals, concert events, and extensive community engagement programming, including classes, scholarships, and one of the largest high school musical theatre award programs in the nation. Located on 16 acres in Swope Park, the historic, city-owned venue is the second-largest outdoor producing theatre in the country with almost 8,000 seats.

Follow Starlight on social media @kcstarlight and visit kcstarlight.com for more information.

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