



Media Release // FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 27, 2023

CIFF Executive Director Steve Schroeder to Step Down Next Month

CALGARY, AB - Today the Calgary International Film Festival announces that, after 12 successful years with the organization, Executive Director Steve Schroeder will step down on December 15, 2023. CIFF's Board of Directors has appointed Operations Director and Chief of Staff Katherine Penhale as Acting Executive Director.

"What a privilege and opportunity my time with CIFF has been! I'm proud of everything we've accomplished. It's been fun and challenging in all the best ways" said Steve Schroeder. "I continue to be awestruck by the talent and artistry of the hundreds of filmmakers who come through the festival each year. To everyone who supports and attends the festival, and to the colleagues and friends I've made here, I'm truly grateful for you. CIFF's future is bright, with a vision and plan for 2024-26 that is full of opportunity, and I'm looking forward to seeing Katherine stretch her wings as Acting Executive Director."

Upon his arrival at CIFF, Schroeder helped steer the organization out of a financial crisis while focusing on an audience and filmmaker-first strategy that built the festival's reputation and sustainability.

Highlights from his tenure include the introduction of large-scale events, record revenues and audiences, an expansion of year-round programming, the achievement of Oscar-qualifying status for short films, and an increased role for CIFF as a leading public-facing champion of Alberta's screen industry. In 2020 he introduced an innovative hybrid model that successfully sustained the festival's program size, artistic scope and audience through the pandemic.

"Steve has been an instrumental member and leader of the CIFF team for over a decade and his body of work during this time has allowed us to launch into our next phase, which we look forward to unveiling soon. His ability to connect the vision and goals of the organization have been paramount to our success and the strong position we are currently in. I, our entire Board of Directors and staff wish Steve the very best and thank him for his years of hard work and dedication to CIFF," said Amish Morjaria, President of CIFF's Board of Directors.

“We are very fortunate to have a solid team at CIFF and a Chief of Staff in Katherine who is ready to step up during this transition. We are confident on where we are and where we are headed in the lead up to our 25th anniversary in 2024.”

Penhale joined the CIFF team in 2016, where she quickly grew from a Venue Coordinator position to Operations Manager in 2018. She was promoted to Operations Director in 2021 and then to her current position of Operations Director and Chief of Staff in January 2023.

Throughout her professional career Penhale has performed multiple leadership roles through strategic planning, managing end-to-end operational functions, cross-functional collaboration, and financial analysis within highly competitive and fast-paced general business environments.

Schroeder leaves the organization with a solid reputation and in strong financial shape. The Board recently approved a 2024-26 Vision and Design plan for the festival, framing its post-Eau Claire venue and partnership strategy. CIFF will unveil these plans in Spring 2024.

-30-

For Media Inquiries, please contact:

Aldona Barutowicz (she/her), Publicist

Telephone: (403) 471-5308

Email: publicist@ciffcalgary.ca

CIFF | Calgary International Film Festival

ciffcalgary.ca | @CIFFcalgary#260, 999 8 St. SW Calgary, AB

About the Calgary International Film Festival

Running annually since 2000, the Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF) is a not-for-profit charitable organization that brings films and filmmakers from around the world to Calgary for its annual Fall festival and year-round programming. CIFF is now the largest event of its kind in Alberta and the Prairies, bringing audiences together for remarkable and engaging cinematic experiences.