

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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CNN's Alisyn Camerota Elected to Westport Country Playhouse's Board of Trustees

Johnna G. Torsone Named Honorary Trustee; Anna Czekaj-Farber Elected Chair

Alisyn Camerota, journalist, author, anchor of CNN's morning show "New Day," and Westport, CT resident, is elected to the board of trustees at Westport Country Playhouse. In her three decades in journalism, Camerota has covered stories nationally and internationally, earning an Emmy Award for her breaking news coverage of the arrest of Roger Stone, and the prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award for her breaking news coverage of Hurricane Maria's impact on Puerto Rico.

In other board of trustees' transitions, Johnna G. Torsone of Stamford is named an honorary trustee after serving on the board since 2007, and Anna Czekaj-Farber of Westport is elected board chair after serving on the board since 2013. Czekaj-Farber succeeds Barbara Streicker of Westport, who was board chair since October 2015, and continues to serve on the board since 2006. The Playhouse's board of trustees includes 26 members.

"We are immensely grateful to Johnna Torsone for her long service; there is no person more deserving of a permanent place on the Playhouse's honorary board," said Michael Barker, Playhouse managing director. "Thanks also to Barbara Streicker, who as president oversaw my hiring and led us so effectively through the first months of this pandemic. Mark Lamos [Playhouse artistic director] and I are thrilled that Barbara will remain on the board as our new president Anna Czekaj-Farber takes on that role. Anna's long association with the Playhouse, as well as her background as an artist, economist, and producer, are an ideal combination for dynamic and forward-thinking leadership.

"Finally, as we continue to prioritize equity, artistry, and community, we are beyond pleased to welcome Alisyn Camerota as a Playhouse trustee. Alisyn brings her skill as a communications professional, family roots in Westport, and touch of celebrity to her board service. The Playhouse is blessed with amazing trustee leadership for our next chapter."

Since joining CNN in 2014 Camerota, has been at the forefront of today's most pressing news events, including the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey in Houston, the Paris and Brussels terror attacks, and the Parkland, FL school shooting. Her interviews with the Parkland student survivors in the hours after the massacre, as well as with the NRA, became integral parts of the national conversation on gun safety. In covering the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, Camerota's Voter Panels were must-see viral moments. As a leading voice of the #MeToo movement, she helped to provide the #SilenceBreakers with a platform to tell their stories.

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In addition to her role as anchor of "New Day," Camerota has also anchored a number of primetime specials, including "Tipping Point: Sexual Harassment in America" and "The Hunting Ground: Sexual Assault on Campus." She is on the national advisory council of The News Literacy Project, which works to teach kids how to spot misinformation and fake news. She's also an Advisory Member of Press Forward, working to combat sexual harassment in newsrooms.

Camerota attended American University on a Presidential scholarship, graduating cum laude in Broadcast Journalism. Her debut novel, "Amanda Wakes Up," was selected by National Public Radio as one of the best books of the year, and by Oprah Magazine as "a must read." She is currently working on a memoir.

Camerota was part of a Westport Country Playhouse-hosted community conversation three years ago. Entitled "Female Power Unleashed: Politics and Positive Change," the public event acknowledged Women's History Month. She was also featured in a short-form documentary celebrating the theater's 90-season history last fall, and has been a Playhouse subscriber and supporter for several years.

Johnna G. Torsone, named honorary trustee, serves as executive vice president and chief human resources officer at Pitney Bowes Inc. since 1993, and is chair of the Pitney Bowes Foundation. Torsone was a law partner in New York City where she practiced employment and labor law for 14 years.

Anna Czekaj-Farber, newly elected board of trustees' chair, is a former opera singer. She now produces and invests in Broadway shows and other artistic ventures in New York. Czekaj-Farber studied finance and economics at Hunter College.

Due to the global pandemic, the Playhouse campus remains closed since March 2020. The 2021 Season is scheduled to begin in April, online and in-person. Playhouse management will be following the science and the State of Connecticut Department of Health guidelines in deciding when and how to safely open its buildings to the public.

For information on the Playhouse's 2021 season, visit westportplayhouse.org, leave a message on the box office voicemail at (203) 227-4177, or email at boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org. The Playhouse's physical box office is closed during the pandemic, but staff is working from home, returning phone messages and answering emails. Please understand with the high volume of inquiries, it may take up to 72 hours to respond. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced theater of the highest caliber and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The not-for-profit Playhouse provides this experience in multiple ways by offering live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos; educational and community engagement events to further explore the work on stage; the New Works Initiative, a program dedicated to the discovery, development, and production of new live theatrical works; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; Script in Hand play readings to deepen relationships with audiences and artists; the renowned Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; youth performance training through Broadway Method Academy, Westport Country Playhouse's resident conservatory program; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. Charity Navigator has recently awarded its top 4-star charity rating to the Playhouse in recognition of its strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

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